N A T U R E A N D

T H E O R G A N I C

S E N S I B I L I T Y

(with special reference to Coleridge, Wordsworth, Baudelaire and D. H. Lawrence)

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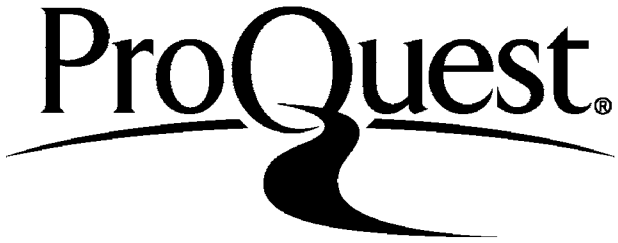

A BRIEF ABSTRACT OF THE FOLLOWING THESIS.

In 'Nature and the Organic Sensibility' I have attempted to consider four themes in relation to four writers. The four themes are as follows: firstly, the relation of mans nature in Nature and the organic connections branching out from this into society and tradition; secondly, the relation of the unconscious to the conscious mind and the way in which this is affected by the natural and the social setting; thirdly, the relation between will and spontaneity and its bearing on the wholeness of human response; fourthly, the theme of childhood and the link between childhood and adult awareness.

From the examination of these four themes there emerges (hence the title of the thesis) the conception of an harmonious 'organic sensibility' which is the aim of a right relation between man and Nature, between unconscious and conscious mind, between will and spontaneity, between childhood and manhood.

The discussion of these themes takes the form of four linked chapters, each being given to a consideration of one of the four chosen writers. I have, in order to draw conclusions from and not impose them on the material, tried to deal with complete works or passages of some length from works which seem to me of particular relevance.

Chapter One (Coleridge) concentrates largely upon the symbolism of 'Christabel' and 'The Ancient Mariner'; Chapter Two

(Wordsworth), upon passages from 'The Prelude' and 'The Excursion' and Wordsworth's conception of Lucy; Chapter Three (Baudelaire) upon passages from his prose works which are of especial importance as background to the attitudes of his poetry; Chapter Four (Lawrence) upon two works in the main, 'The Rainbow' and 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious.'

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NATURE and the ORGANIC SENSIBILITY.

INTRODUCTION.

In the last one hundred and fifty years literature has come largely to concern itself with the question of man's increased self-consciousness and the conflict inherent in this self-consciousness. By the term 'inorganic sensibility' I wish to indicate the split which has taken place and to examine the artists' knowledge of this split. By the term 'organic sensibility' I wish to indicate that state of wholeness towards which the artist may strive in the face of the split within himself or of the threat to his wholeness inherent in the society to which he belongs. Of the relation of these two conditions to the word Nature I shall speak at the end of this introduction when I have set out my theme more fully.

One may express the conflict in the modern sensibility in a number of ways, but perhaps the most easily approachable antinomy is that of Jane Austen's Sense versus Sensibility. Sense, let us say, looks towards 'traditionary sympathies' (in Wordsworth's phrase), towards the rootedness of community life, towards balanced conduct and the need for measure in our living. Its fruit is character. Sensibility longs - to adopt Keats - for a life of sensations rather than one of thoughts. Unchecked, it tends towards the subjective, towards the personal absolute at the expense of the social body. Thus its temptations are greatly increased in times of social instability. Its fruit is

not character but personality. If character may become a lifeless fixity, personality may become a mere act. 'Never trust for one moment,' wrote D.H. Lawrence, 'any individual who has unmistakable personality. He is sure to be a life-traitor. His personality is only a sort of actor's mask. It is his self-conscious ego, his ideal self masquerading and prancing round, showing off. He may not be aware of it. But that makes no matter. He is a painted bug.' (Democracy : III- Personality.)

The problem of our consciousness is to recognise the limits of both unqualified Sense and unqualified Sensibility and to fuse them into wholeness, vivified and purified. Lawrence himself expresses this by saying, in a letter to the psychologist Dr. Trigant Burrow, 'How to regain the naive or innocent soul - how to make it the man within man..... and at the same time keep the cognitive mode for defences and adjustments and 'work' - voila!'

Our own world has moved dangerously onwards, in certain respects in the direction of unqualified sensibility. The movement begins with the tale of terror and finds a culmination, to give one example, in the paintings of Salvator Dali and in surrealism. Indeed, the surrealists were quick to unearth 'Otranto' and to admire their own origins: 'a method.....nothing short of the surrealist,' says M. André Breton commenting in his essay 'Limits not Frontiers of Surrealism' on Horace Walpole's novel. That cultivation of hysteria to which

Baudelaire admitted, is the common ground of Sensibility whether it manifests itself in a Marianne Dashwood, a novelist of the school of terror, a Rimbaud or a Dali.

As embodiments of Sensibility, I have taken aspects of the work of Coleridge and that of Baudelaire. These poets illustrate the nature of Sensibility and its operation under the influence of a common and increasing pressure - the breakdown of traditional society and the retreat of the individual into himself. At one stage, Coleridge's Mariner is exiled from society but it is still possible for him to view the beauty of traditional forms symbolised in the church-going, although he knows, as the self-conscious and self-divided modern man, that he cannot return to that traditional pattern. At a further stage, Baudelaire, isolated at the heart of the modern metropolis, sends forth his imaginary Voyagers 'comme le Juif errant.' 'Nous voulons', he says in 'Le Voyage', speaking the language of Sensibility.

> Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,
> Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe?
> Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du <u>nouveau</u>!

The traditional forms through which the individual can realise himself, the models of conduct and belief, are no longer there in society. Professor Lionel Trilling in his broadcast lecture, 'A Portrait of Western Man' ('Listener' June 11, 1953) has written: '...I think it will consort with the facts to say that in modern times there have seemed to be more forms of being to choose among....and the

strong sense that the choice is more problematical than it has ever been before.' Thus the individual must rely, for better or for worse, upon himself. Baudelaire significantly sidesteps the choice by an invocation of death. There are many possible voyages, but the only one welcome to the sensibility jaded by ennui and self-division is the plunge 'au fond du gouffre':

O Mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps! levons l'ancre.
Ce pays nons ennui, ô Mort! Appareillons!

In such poetry of extreme sensibility we always feel ourselves at the point of extreme choice, that between life or death, between meeting life's demands by inner discipline or rejecting them by a retreat into the self, and the stress of temptation is weighted most heavily in favour of the second alternative. This is the temptation behind the pattern of the tale of terror. It is the temptation behind 'Christabel' where the vision of childlike innocence is overcome by an inexplicable dread. Coleridge did not finish the poem; perhaps this was because, in his own experience of divided sensibility, there was no real resolution, just as there was no final one for the Ancient Mariner. It might, I think, be justly said that in the poetry of Coleridge and Baudelaire, totally different as the form of their work is, there exists to a great extent an inability to accept the challenge of the changed conditions of life and of the dissolution of the traditional

social pattern.

Against Coleridge's anxiety and Baudelaire's choice of death, we may place the modes of organic sensibility which Wordsworth and Lawrence both exemplify. An organic sensibility signified for them an alliance between undivided instinctive awareness and what may perhaps best be called fortitude. Wordsworth embodied this union in the Wanderer of 'The Excursion' and in Michael; Lawrence sought for it, as Professor Trilling has said, 'in British miners and aristocrats, in captains of industry, Hungarian noblemen, Italian peasants, Etruscan warriors and Aztec priests.' Lawrence and Wordsworth saw man at his most natural and least excessive when he had fused those strands of his being which are forever tending apart towards a cold Sense and a feverish Sensibility. The new Romantic 'imagination' is crudely and self-dividedly expressed in the tales of terror. In Wordsworth it finds a true and organic expression and again in Lawrence after him. The specifically new elements that now enter into a consideration of human consciousness (for example, its roots in the pre-mental, unconscious mind) are referred to the mean of a balanced outlook and to those positives which the experience of mankind has proved to be stable. Thus Wordsworth speaks of 'traditionary sympathies', Lawrence of re-establishing 'the living organic connections with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind, and nation and family.' Both writers are the opponents of the cult of personality and the unresolved inner weaknesses on which it is based; they are

opponents of those loose Romantic feelings which feed themselves upon spleen, and which, hovering between pleasure and pain, are unable to distinguish one from the other. Again, as in the cases of Coleridge and Baudelaire, we have the increasing pressure upon these writers of the inexorable fact of modern urban development and its political counterparts. Wordsworth could see about him the remnants of a positive framework of community among the Lakeland peasantry although such a framework was under threat of disappearance. For Lawrence the remnants had further diminished, as Wordsworth foresaw they would, and writing to Dr. Trigant Burrow, Lawrence was to say: 'it is our being cut off that is our ailment, and out of this ailment everything bad arises....Now is the time between Good Friday and Easter. We're absolutely in the tomb. If only one saw a chink of light in the tomb door.' And the tomb for Lawrence was principally the lack of a real social connection: 'What ails me is the absolute frustration of my primeval societal instinct. The hero illusion starts with the individualist illusion, and all resistances ensue. I think societal instinct deeper than sex instinct - and societal repression much more devastating.'

Lawrence, of course, is not 'reasonable' in the sense that Wordsworth could be. He is far shriller, far less composed - and perhaps, indeed, there is ample cause for him to be so. Where they coincide is in their cleansing of the ground of feeling, their instinct for what is primary in human nature and what is secondary.

In Baudelaire a reaction against Sensibility only takes place once he has suffered its consequences and almost killed the instinctive man. He can diagnose his case, but he cannot embody in his poetry a living alternative: it remains the great poetry of disintegration and diagnosis, of consciousness, rather than being. Again in Coleridge one sees a cultivation of Sensibility which tends toward emotional overstatement, while at the same time (in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and in the Dejection Ode) he can suggest as I hope to show, in what the pattern of an organic sensibility consists. The 'Gothick' setting of 'Christabel' [and the figure of the Ancient Mariner belongs] is the world of Sensibility, to that same world, though his context is superior to his literary origins. In 'Kubla Khan' the visionary creator also belongs there - a Romantic version of the possessed poet of the 'Phaedrus':

> Beware! Beware!
> His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
> Weave a circle round him thrice,
> And close your eyes with holy dread,
> For he on honey-dew hath fed,
> And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Wordsworth and Lawrence would, I think, have had their suspicions of the poet who is 'carried away' into ecstasy by his subject. Wordsworth preferred chaster modes of expression. Lawrence might well have countered with Lilly's words to Aaron Sisson in 'Aaron's Rod':

'Passion or no passion, ecstasy or no ecstasy, urge or no urge, there's no goal outside yourself where you can consummate like an eagle flying into the sun, or a moth into a candle.'

This is not to say that 'Kubla Khan' is not perfect of its kind,

but to suggest that its kind is not the very greatest kind - the very greatest kind being best represented by the verse, say, of the Dejection Ode where a certain chastity of diction prevails; and even here the language of Sensibility obtrudes in the unfortunate seventh stanza with its lute that screams with agony 'by torture lengthened out', its blasted tree and witches.

Nature for Wordsworth had represented a benign and maternal power. The middle years of the nineteenth century no longer afforded the possibility of such a belief: ~~geology and~~ the evolutionary hypothesis drove men to contemplate 'Nature red in tooth and claw' and Tennyson to formulate the question:

> Are God and Nature then at strife
> That Nature lends such evil dreams?

Baudelaire, who was Tennyson's contemporary, although he had behind him the example of Alfred the Vigny, whose Nature declaimed

> On me dit une mère et je suis une tombe,

did not choose to arraign Nature for that reason. He disliked the Romantic Nature of the religious and idealistic Lamartine because, he said, he disliked 'sanctified vegetables'. He disliked the term 'natural' because it implied the instinctive and the spontaneous and because he was more concerned with the artificial and the self-conscious. He pondered, as we shall see, the Manichean heresy of Nature as the product of a fallen creator, but he is not really vitally concerned with man's relation to his environment in the sense that Wordsworth was before and Lawrence after him. His use of the word 'natural' appears usually as a negative term in his description of humanity's moral make-up, a usage exemplified

in Augustinian Christianity. He merely imported the idea of an evil creation from de Sade as I shall attempt to show, in order to give added support to his own particular psychological preconceptions.

Whatever acts of bad faith and psychological muddle led to Baudelaire's more extreme denunciations of 'the natural' in the spheres of morals and cosmology, in the artistic sphere the result was, paradoxically, of great advantage to him. Here he was enabled consciously to initiate the Symbolist aesthetic whereby the artist is no longer tied to the object but is free to create, however extravagantly, a 'Nature' of his own making which, in Mr. Eliot's phrase, is 'the objective correlative' of the emotion he wishes to express. Rimbaud took this freedom a step further when, in 'Les Illuminations,' he expressed his dissatisfaction with the 'reality' of the nineteenth century world by inventing cities, fantastic episodes and flora and fauna of his own. It was a similar attitude of freedom from the object, with its abandonment of the logical transitions of the lived reality and the observable relations of created Nature, which produced the Nighttown section in Joyce's 'Ulysses', the multi-dimensional 'reality' of 'Finnegans Wake', and the nightmare world of Eliot's 'The Waste-land'. In painting, the same revolution in the artist's attitude to the object of created Nature, may be seen in the transition from naturalism to, say, cubism. Of this aspect of Nature recreated I shall not, in the following pages, write at length, for it is a subject which invites a thesis in itself.

Lawrence, the last of our four writers, is divided from the great romantics by Darwin and by anthropology[10] (hence his no longer

maternal Nature and hence his more convincing interest in the primitive than any left over from the ideal of 'the noble savage' could make possible). He is divided from them also by psychoanalysis (hence his more detailed formulation of the idea of the unconscious mind). The fact of 'Nature red in tooth and claw' does not horrify Lawrence as it had horrified Tennyson: 'In nature', he writes in 'Reflections on The Death of a Porcupine', 'one creature devours another, and this is an essential part of all existence and of all being. It is not something to lament over, nor something to try to reform.' And, at the same time, he demands a closer relation between man and Nature: 'Man's life consists in a connection with all things in the universe. Whoever can establish, or initiate a new connection between mankind and the circumambient universe is, in his own degree, a saviour.' Such a quotation reveals the nature of Lawrence's interest in savage ritual and its sympathetic magic as creating a living relation between man and his environment.

Lawrence does not, as the Victorians did, crave for an explanation: the impact of evolutionary theory had been so great because man apparently so firmly established as the lord of the universe, now found himself dragged back into the biological continuum of animal creation. Over half a century later, 'Man,' Lawrence can say - and say without regret - 'is not the criterion.' He asks for no explanation of creation as it is, but accepts it in all its duality. 'The creative mystery', as

he says in 'Women in Love' '(is) unsearchable.' Thus Lawrence can turn without Tennyson's nagging doubt, religiously toward Nature as Wordsworth had done, but in a changed context. Despite, however, this change his interests often approach very nearly the fundamental Wordsworthian interests of the enriching links between man and his environment, between adult consciousness and spontaneity.

The focus of the discussion in the following pages will be upon the four chosen writers' valuations of the term Nature and the complex of ideas which in the past one hundred and fifty years this term has brought into consideration. I shall attempt to reduce my discussion to four main themes.

Firstly, I shall deal with the relation of man's nature in Nature, and with organic connections branching out into society, tradition, the natural setting.

Secondly, I shall consider the relation of the unconscious to the conscious mind, and the conception of an organic sensibility in which unconscious and conscious work in unison and balance.

Thirdly, I shall discuss the relation between will and spontaneity and to the question of how far feeling is spontaneous and not willed into being, and how far we are characters and not personalities. This point of discussion will be worked out chiefly in relation to Baudelaire, the radically inorganic sensibility with whom the will, as I shall attempt to show, becomes the main motive force, divorced from instinct and from intuition.

My fourth theme is the theme of childhood, the nature of 'natural piety' and the organic links between adult consciousness and the life of the child. This point of discussion will centre chiefly upon Wordsworth and Lawrence. With Baudelaire the link is, to a great extent, a negative one. With Coleridge the loss of that innocence which we attribute to childhood is expressed in the figure of Christabel in whom a split occurs between the mind of innocence and that of unresolved experience.

My four themes relate to the question of Sense and Sensibility with which I began in that they are, I believe, four of the major themes into the which the discussion of the split between Sense and Sensibility has crystalised in both verse and prose. I have brought the word Nature into the title of my thesis because it is with the Romantics' rediscovery of Nature that the discussion opens. Baudelaire in reacting against the Romantics' cult of Nature uses the word as a negative against their positive. Lawrence avoids the capital 'n' but his intuition of man's relation to his environment links with the fundamentally Wordsworthian interest in the natural setting. I have not discussed my four main themes in the order in which they are given above, but with each writer have approached them from that point where it has seemed to me most advantageous to break into the sphere of the individual writer's concerns.

CHAPTER ONE

NATURE and the UNCONSCIOUS:
a study in the poetry of S.T. Coleridge.

'The psychological approach has long been attributed to Coleridge as a literary critic but has not been so well recognised in other parts of his work. Everywhere it depends on his acute sense of the experiencing, integrating self, the complex human personality.' - Kathleen Coburn : INQUIRING SPIRIT.

(i)

The Romantic exploration of external Nature implied also a simultaneous movement inwards, a new measurement of human nature. If Nature was mountain, sky and sea, it was also the unconscious mind and the hidden forces of the personality. Subject and object coalesced in the spontaneous overflow of feeling, meditation upon which produced poetry. Thus Wordsworth could write:

> To every natural form, rock, fruit and flower,
> Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
> I gave a moral life; I saw them feel,
> Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
> Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
> That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
>
> (The Prelude).

Here, in the words of Coleridge, we see, at work 'the mystery of genius in the Fine Arts in the artists power to make the

external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature.' ('On Poesy or Art,' Appendix to Shawcross' Biographia Literaria.) A further poetic expression of this philosophy would be Emily Bronte's lines:

> What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
> More glory and more grief than I can tell:
> The earth that wakes one human heart to feeling
> Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.
> (Stanzas.)

'In looking at objects of Nature', wrote Coleridge in 'Anima Poetae,' 'I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking for, a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists, than observing anything new.' Thus Coleridge's method as a poet was to choose certain basic symbols from the world of Nature - sun, moon, stars, the winds, the sea. In 1797, simultaneously with his reading of Cook and Hawkins and with his composition of 'The Ancient Mariner' and the first part of 'Christabel', he was looking about him for material for the proposed 'Hymns to the Sun, the Moon and the Elements,' of which 'The Gutch Memorandum Book' tells us there were to be six. And again, in September, 1816 - almost twenty years later - he writes to Hugh J. Rose that, 'Should it please the Almighty to restore (him) to an adequate state of health,' he will concentrate his powers 'in three works. The First,... Seven Hymns with a large preface or prose commentary to each - 1. to the Sun. 2. the Moon. 3. Earth. 4. Air. 5. Water. 6. Fire. 7. God.' In January, 1821 he writes to T. Allsop that he would 'fain finish the Christabel' and regrets 'the proud

time when (he) planned, when (he) had present to (his) mind, the materials, as well as the scheme of the Hymns entitled Spirit, Sun, Earth, Air, Water, Fire and Man....' The writing of the Hymns was never undertaken, but Coleridge's use of an elemental symbolism - drawn partly from his experience of Nature itself and partly from his experience of 'Nature made thought' (i.e., the books he had read) - furnished him with a method for bodying forth in his most significant products those inner states where the psychology of the individual has fallen out of concord with that organic unity which Nature affords. In a letter to Sotheby written on Sept.10th.1802 we find Coleridge's comment on his method: 'Never to see or describe any interesting appearance in nature ~~in that~~ without connecting it by dim analogies, with the moral world, proves faintness of impression. Nature has her proper interest, and he will know who believes and feels that everything has a life of its own, and that we are all <u>One Life.</u> A poet's heart and intellect should be <u>combined</u>, intimately combined and unified with the great appearances of nature, and not merely held in solution and loose mixture with them, in the shape of formal similes.'

(ii)

Individuality does not exist in a vacuum and the sickness of an individual mind reflects, in a greater or lesser degree, the sickness of its epoch. If Nature was the ultimate source of his symbols, it was the contemporary novels of terror that

supplied Coleridge with hints for characters, for a framework and for his almost morbidly charged atmosphere.*

We must begin with what may at first appear to be a digression. In his 'Idées sur les Romans,' published in 1800 as a preface to 'Les Crimes de l'Amour,' the Marquis de Sade provides us with an early example of the psychological mode of literary interpretation. His preface attempts to define the field of the novel and to extend the meaning of the word 'nature' to cover those regions of psychology ('le coeur de l'homme') where conscious or social standards are not the immediately operative ones. In writing of Richardson and Fielding he points out that their strength is to be found in an ability to scrutinise the human heart without first making it fit into a preconceived moral scheme. 'La vertue,' he writes, 'quelque belle, quelque necessaire qu'elle soit, n'est pourtant qu'un des modes de ce coeur étonnant.....que le Roman, miroir fidèle de ce coeur, doit necessairement en tracer tous les plis.' In tracing out all its layers, the novelist must recognise that 'la nature (est) plus bisarre que les moralistes ne nous la peignent' and that 'le romancier est l'homme de la nature, elle l'a créé pour être son peintre.' **

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* His use of ballad metre derives from Percy's 'Reliques.' Humphrey House, speaking of 'The Ancient Mariner'(Coleridge - the Clark Lectures 1951-2,'),has pointed out the links of vocabulary with Percy's version of 'Sir Cavline',of past tenses with 'did' with his versions of 'Young Waters' and 'King Estmere.'

** De Sade, of course, carries all this to his own perilous extreme.

De Sade goes on to link his remarks to the genre of 'le roman noir,' the tale of terror, and to show that its bizarre fables represent the objectifying of a contemporary state of mind, that they are true to internal nature reacting to the presence of profound, external social changes. (I am not, for the moment, concerned with the artistic achievements of the tale of terror, but with its psychological pattern.) The importance of de Sade's 'Idées' seems not to have been recognised until a century and a quarter later when M. André Breton commented, in his essay 'Limits not Frontiers of Surrealism,' upon the collective myth that the tales of terror employ and the meaning of its symbols.

'The truth,' says M.Breton, 'which the Marquis de Sade was the first to disentangle in his "Idées sur les Romans," is that we find ourselves in the presence of a style which, for the period in which it was produced, illustrates 'the indispensable fruits of the revolutionary upheaval to which the whole of Europe was sensitive." Let us realise the importance of this fact.' [continues M. Breton] The attention of humanity in its most universal and spontaneous form as well as in its most individual and purely intellectual form, here has been attracted not by the scrupulously exact description of exterior events of which the world ~~war~~ was the theatre, but rather by the ~~expression~~ of the confused feelings awakened by nostalgia and terror..... The ruins appear suddenly so full of significance in that they express the collapse of the feudal period; the inevitable ghost which haunts them indicates a peculiarly intense fear of the return of the powers of the past,

the subterranean passages represent the difficulty and perils of the dark path followed by each individual toward the light; in the stormy night can be heard the incessant roar of cannon. Such is the turbulent background chosen for the appearance of the beings of pure temptation, combining in the highest degree the struggle between the instinct of death on the one hand..... and, on the other, Eros who exacts after each human hecatomb the glorious restoration of life.'

M. Breton illustrates de Sade's point that the tale of terror draws its symbolic content from the central conflict of the era with the example of Horace Walpole, a man who 'owing to his rank and early experience in public life, was very well informed as to the actual political situation of the time' and who composed 'Otranto', 'glad' in his own words, 'to think of anything rather than politics.' But the contemporary scene re-emerged on the subconscious plane of allegory: 'Otranto' gives us all the basic symbols of M. Breton's inventory - the gloomy castle, the spectre (there are, in fact, two), thunder-claps, earth-tremors, 'subterraneous caves.' The instinct of death is present in the person of the tyrant Manfred, Eros in the long-lost child who is found at last and rules in the tyrant's stead.

The myth recurs with variations in all the novels of the genre, in Mrs. Radcliffe's 'The Italian', in Lewis's 'The Monk', in Maturin's 'Melmoth the Wanderer,' and while there occur many departures from the simple archetype of 'Otranto,' the elements of the situation remain constant: 'beings of pure

temptation' as M. Breton says, fatal men and fatal women (Coleridge's Geraldine is one of the second, his mariner a converted relative of one of the first) impinge on the normal world; and usually there is a good deal of insistence on the physical and moral torture of some unfortunate woman - Walpole's Matilda having been the first of the line.

Before continuing further, I think it only honest to admit that as artistic achievements the tales of terror are boring: one comes to the point when one's chief difficulty is simply to keep one's eye from wandering off the page. At the time they were written, however, we must remember how people of intelligence and sensibility read and were moved by these stories. Madame de Chastenay, who translated 'Otranto' into French, records that the book 'gave my imagination a shock from which my reason was incapable of shielding it. The meaningful voices, the prolonged gloom, the fantastic effects of its terrors overwhelmed me once more like a child and without my being able to discover the cause.' As a young man, Coleridge himself undoubtedly found in the stories an echo of his own inner malaise. Their effect upon his sensibility was wholly different from that which they exercised upon the sensibility of the youthful Shelley - the near hysteria of parts of 'The Cenci' leaves one with room for regret that he was so familiar with the genre and at so young an age, whereas the controlled terror of 'Christabel' points to a useful, if inferior influence.*

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* The influence of Poe on Baudelaire represents a similar kind of thing.

(iii)

In 1794 Coleridge favourably reviewed Mrs. Radcliffe's 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' in 'The Critical Review.' Opening with a quotation from Gray's 'Progress of Poesy' -

> Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
> This can unlock the gates of Joy,
> Of Horrour, that, and thrilling Fears,
> Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears. -

he concurs that 'the keys referring to the third line, Mrs. Radcliffe must be allowed completely to be in possession of.' What gains Coleridge's interest is obviously the suspense Mrs. Radcliffe creates: 'The same powers of description,' he writes, 'are displayed (as in the "Romance in the Forest"), the same predilection is discovered for the wonderful and the gloomy - the same mysterious terrors are continually exciting in the mind the idea of a supernatural appearance.....' His review, one must admit, closes with a caveat: 'Curiosity is raised oftener than gratified; or rather it is raised so high that no adequate gratification can be given it.' The anachronism of modern manners 'is not,' he insists, 'counterbalanced by Gothic arches and antique furniture.' Already he is critically alert to what must be avoided.

A letter of Coleridge's, written in 1802, on the subject of Monk Lewis, exclaims against the prevailing taste for horror, in rather forced tones of shocked piety: 'I have a wife, I have sons, I have an infant Daughter - what excuse could I offer to my conscience if by suffering my own name to be connected with those of Mr. Lewis or Mr. Moore, I was the <u>occasion</u> of their

reading the "Monk", or the wanton poems of Thomas Little Esqre. Should I not be an infamous Pander to the Devil in the Seduction of my own offspring? My head turns giddy, my heart sickens, at the very thought of seeing such books in the hands of a child of mine.' However exaggerated the tone of the letter may sound, it seems evident that Coleridge could take his novels of terror seriously. In a less elevated vein, eight years later during the summer of 1810, he sent Wordsworth a copy of Scott's 'Lady of the Lake' with a series of humorous comments on the poem, concluding:

'In short, my dear William! - it is time to write a Recipe for poems of this sort - (I amused myself a day or two ago on reading a Romance in Mrs. Radcliffe's style with making out a scheme, which was to serve for all romances a priori only varying in proportions) - ! The stock characters and properties he lists as, 'a Baron or Baroness ignorant of their Birth and in some dependent situation - Castle - on a Rock - a Sepulchre at some distance from the Rock - Deserted Rooms - underground passages - Pictures - a Ghost, so believed - or - a written record - blood upon it!..... Now I say it is time to make out the component parts of the Scottish Mintrelsy - the first Business must be a vast string of Patronymics, and names of Mountains, Rivers etc..... Secondly all the nomenclature of Gothic architecture, of Heraldy, of Arms, of Hunting and Falconry.....3, some pathetic moralizing on old times..... For the rest, whatever suits Mrs. Radcliffe i.e., in the Fable and Dramatis Personae, will do for the Poem....'

The truth of the matter is that Coleridge's list is to be found, almost in its entirety, in 'Christabel' and that 'Christabel'

succeeds. Besides Baron, castle, rock, spectre, deserted rooms, Gothic architecture, heraldry, we have a 'gray-haired friar', the ghosts of 'three sinful sextons' (in a passage the poet might, indeed, have dispensed with) and, as in Scott, the evocative place names: Bratha Head, Borrowdale, Langdale Pike, Witches' Lair and Wyndermere.

'Christabel' is perhaps the only tale of terror which expresses adequately in artistic terms the archetypal pattern of its genre, the struggle between the instinct of death and that of life. This struggle, centres on the relationship between Geraldine, the 'fatal woman,' and Christabel herself,'the maid devoid of guile and sin.' Geraldine is not listed among Dr.Mario Praz's fatal women in his 'Romantic Agony,' and one feels that, artistically, she provides a far more subtle example than many of those we find there. The fact of her absence seems rather curious, for it is to Coleridge's ballad 'Love' that Dr. Praz traces the genesis of Keat's poem 'La Belle Dame Sand Merci' the title of which he uses for his lengthy chapter on the 'femme fatale.'

What, according to Dr. Praz, are the significant characteristics of the fated beings of Romantic literature? They are primarily the dramatisation of an inner disturbance, such as we find commented on by M. Breton,a spiritual division that is, one might say, in love with itself and finds expression either in the inflicting of, or the passive submission to pain. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this emotional crisis is concentrated largely in the figure of the fatal man (e.g. the Byronic hero) and at the end in the fatal woman (e.g. Swinburne's Cleopatra,

Flaubert's Salambo, Wilde's Salome) - the Gothic element of early Remanticism being exchanged for an exotic oriental setting. 'The male', as Dr. Praz concisely puts it, 'who at first tends towards sadism inclines, at the end of the century, towards masochism.' That is the graph of the situation, but let us return to the particular poem.

In 'Christabel' the struggle of evil and innocence is examined, although within the framework of the typically algolagnic* myth, for the purposes of moral realisation of the manner in which evil works upon and transforms good, and not, as in Mrs. Radcliffe or Monk Lewis, in order to produce a fashionable shudder. Coleridge's complete success in achieving this realisation is due to a dramatic tension building up to a final, irrevocable climax and regulated by its background of symbols from Nature.

As far as the poem goes (it is a 'fragment') it is complete.** The climax of,

> And turning from his own sweet maid
> The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
> Led forth the Lady Geraldine.

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* Algolagnic = pertaining to the pain-pleasure experience, and perhaps needs some apology. It was put into circulation by Dr. Praz, used in the critical writings of the Surrealists and also by M.Maurice Heine who, before his death, was largely responsible for the beginnings of a cult of de Sade.

** On Coleridge's insistence that 'in my very first conception of the tale I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness, no less than with the loveliness, of a vision,' we have Wordworth's comment: 'I am sure that he never formed a plan or knew what was to be the end of "Christabel", and that he merely deceived himself when he thought, as, he says, that he had had the idea quite clear in his mind.' (Recorded in Crabb Robinson's Dairy.Feb.1st, 1836.).
[Ed. C.J. Morley 1922]

leaves Christabel in that condition of pathological isolation which the Mariner also feels and which Coleridge himself must have known. It follows upon the carefully ordered series of psychological shocks to which Christabel has been subjected and beneath which her innocence is crushed. Mr. Humphrey House says of the poem that it is 'fragmentary and finally unsatisfying' and that its mystery is both incomplete and clueless. If one feels a certain incompleteness about the poem it is because we are left with Christabel's pathological isolation which is never, unlike the Mariner's, to be resolved. Indeed, the Mariner's, it would be more true to say, is only partially resolved: his contact with the Pilot's Boy is fatal and his future existence must be passed in wandering. On the incompleteness of the Mariner's recovery Professor D. W. Harding (The Theme of the Ancient Mariner: Scrutiny, March 1941) writes interestingly: 'The fact of its being Life-in-Death who wins the Mariner shows how incomplete his recovery is going to be;' and - a crucial rejoinder to the account contained in 'Archetypal Patterns in Poetry' - : 'This fact makes it doubtful how far 'The Ancient Mariner' can usefully be viewed as an expression of 'The Rebirth Archetype' of Maud Bodkin's analysis.'

There is, in Christabel, despite the psychological stasis, a completeness about what <u>does</u> happen, if only we pay attention to the premonitory nature of the symbols at the opening and see the poetic interest as centering on the uncertain balance represented here between health and disease, good and

evil, and the end as a tragedy in which neurosis, not death, strikes the final blow. The inorganic sensibility replaces the organic: and therein lies the ultimate Romantic tragedy.

Let us begin with the first important symbolical passage of the poem:

> The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
> It covers but not hides the sky.
> The moon is behind and at the full
> And yet she looks both small and dull. *

Everything hangs in this state of precarious uncertainty, of incipient disease. The cloud threatens the sky, but the sky still shows through, and to counterpoint this, the moon has achieved its most fruitful phase yet remains without the bright appearance of a full moon. Coleridge thus reinforces the idea of potentials in Nature which are finally never to be realised in the story:

> 'Tis a month before the month of May,
> And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The light of the moon is 'cold' and where it falls it illumines a further symbol of decay, the toothless mastiff bitch. In Christabel's room 'not a moonbeam enters here' and here she - ironically enough - feels safe.

Behind the moon in 'The Ancient Mariner' there is the association of the Queen of Heaven, 'the holy Mother' as

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* The image is present in embryo in the Gutch Memorandum Book; a similar phrase occurs in Dorothy Wordsworth Journal for January 25th 1798 and also for January 31st of the same year: 'The sky spread over with one continuous cloud, whitened by the light of the moon....'; and,'....the moon immensely large, the sky scattered over with clouds. These soon closed in, contracting the dimensions of the moon without concealing her.' From the latter Wordsworth developed 'A Night-Piece.'

Coleridge calls her. In 'Christabel' the diseased condition of the moon links suggestively with the inability of Christabel's dead mother, her guardian spirit, to operate in her defence. The sky - again a potential which remains frustrate - should offer her the feeling of freedom and of free will:

> All they who live in the upper sky
> Do love you, holy Christabel

says Geraldine; and Christabel herself knows

> in joys and woes
> That saints will aid if men will call:
> For the blue sky bends over all.

But the sky is not blue during the time of the action of the poem: its sphere no longer operates upon that of the world below although, 'covered but not hidden,' one can see it. Its presence adds to our appreciation of Christabel's growing feelings of helplessness and isolation. The diseased moon prepares us for her transition from a condition of organic innocence to one of complete division. What is the nature of this division and how is its appearance developed in the poem? The development, it should be noticed, takes place through instances of what happens <u>to</u> Christabel rather than what she does. Evil works upon her and by the time she feels <u>possessed</u> by it and, 'with forced unconscious sympathy' perhaps even becoming evil herself, she has lost her own free will.

It is worthwhile here to bear in mind Coleridge's interest in psychological phenomena, in Mesmerism, and even in witchcraft where a powerful idea working upon the human psyche produces the feeling of guilt followed by mental deterioration. Miss

Kathleen Coburn is rejoiced that finally Coleridge is being considered as a psychologist (Introduction to the Philosophical Lectures) and Miss Kathleen Raine in her preface to 'Selected Letters' grants him the honour of having, along with Blake, discovered 'the unconscious' 'a century before Freud.'

It would, I think, be advisable to digress for some moments before labouring 'the unconscious' and to make two definitions of its meaning in order to see how one can apply it most profitably to Coleridge's poetry: (1) The unconscious field of memory: i.e., people forget things which accumulate as memories (latent but not conscious), or as repressions, complexes, neuroses, given certain circumstances. Perhaps, as a compartment of the above, one might say people 'forget' to be good or to do their duty or to love their neighbour, i.e., they are not fully conscious.

(2) What Coleridge calls our 'inmost nature.' Lawrence, in that extremely intelligent and little-read book 'Psycho-analysis and the Unconscious' accused Freud of confusing the content of our first concept above with that of this second. The first constitutes a purely mechanical apparatus, the second 'that essential unique nature of every individual creature,' which is 'unanalysable, undefinable, inconceivable.' (Ibid. Chapter II: 'The Incest Motive and Idealism.') This 'essential unique nature' Lawrence calls 'the living unconscious' (in both 'The Ancient Mariner' and 'Xanadu' its existence and mode of operation is suggested) which '(prompts) new movement and new being - the creative process.' The expression of the two unconsciouses on the aesthetic plane would, translated into

Coleridgean terms, can be equated with Fancy and Imagination (i.e. secondary and creative imagination). In 'Kubla Khan,' for example, where the creative act is described the living unconscious catches up into its stream the deposited elements of the mechanical unconscious (i.e., the 'dancing rocks') and, by implication, forces them to its own uses. Thus, what has been deposited by memory, lying latent and forgotten, is taken up and revivified in creation.

To return to psychology, that part of the mind (our first 'unconscious') which exercises the mechanical faculty (the same is also true of its conscious extension) can frustrate 'the living unconscious' by the act of repression, by the fixation of an idea (as we shall see in 'The Three Graves' and in 'Christabel') or by indulgence in an unnatural whim(e.g., the Mariner's careless murder of the albatross) which conscience, being part of our 'inmost nature' condemns. Thus, if we do an act 'unconsciously', that does not mean that we are acting from our living unconscious. We may be acting mechanically and carrying out what Lawrence has detected and has branded 'the mind's ulterior motive.'

An interesting indication of Coleridge's interests as a psychologist occurs in the preface to that appallingly bad poem 'The Three Graves'. After the inevitable Coleridgean apologia for the subject, the metre and the fragmentary nature of the piece, he tells us that 'its merits, if any, are exclusively psychological.' The story which he claims as 'positive fact, and of no very distant date' concerns 1, the effect on a young girl's mind of her overhearing her mother's blasphemous curse upon both

herself and her lover; 2, the effect of a similar curse on her friend; 3, the effect upon the girl's lover, Edward, once he has married her. 'I was not led,' says Coleridge 'to choose this story from any partiality to tragic, much less to monstrous events (though at the time that I composed the verses, somewhat more than twelve years ago. I was less averse to such subjects than at present), but from finding in it a striking proof of the possible effect on the imagination from an Idea violently and suddenly impressed on it. I had been reading Bryan Edward's account of the effect of the Oby witchcraft on the Negroes in the West Indies, and Hearne's deeply interesting anecdotes of similar workings on the imagination of the Copper Indians.....and I conceived the design of showing that instances of this kind are not peculiar to savage or barbarous tribes, and of illustrating the mode in which the mind is affected in these cases, and the progress and symptoms of the morbid action on the fancy from the beginning.'* All three characters are reduced to a condition of morbid introversion and their minds possessed by the image of the mother. Consciously they try to forget it, but it has disturbed the levels of being beneath consciousness and Edward wakes from a dream, at the climax of the poem, in which he has torn out the mother's heart. Coleridge handles the affair badly

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* Cp. Katherine Coburn's note in her introduction to the 'Philosopical Lectures': 'Now Coleridge, like any addict, was very conscious of subterranean forces in himself which defeated him.....So that when he read Kluges "Magnetismus," or even old John Webster's Folio on "The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft", and met case histories of neuroses and psychoses that today would be classified as schizophrenic or manic depressive, he met things he knew of in his own dreams and anxieties and in his knowledge of human beings; his insights, based on a psychological realism far ahead of his time, have the quality of prophecy.'

as poetic material and we must return to Geraldine's onslaught upon Christabel to see what he is really capable of in dealing with this kind of subject.

To begin with, Christabel finds herself alone; her lover is absent, her mother dead, her father sick:

> Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
> Knells us back to a world of death...
> These words Sir Leoline will say
> Many a morn to his dying day.

Here is the position of the typical persecuted woman of the tale of terror, defenceless and vulnerable, her isolation being intensified by its juxtaposition with the image of 'the one red leaf, the last of its clan,'

> That dances as often as dance it can,
> Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
> On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

In this condition Christobel finds the Lady Geraldine who, according to her own story has been abducted, then abandoned, and takes her into the castle. Coleridge conveys Geraldine's character of fatal woman in a series of startling touches. At the outset he gives no hint of the evil in her nature and Christabel sees her as 'Beautiful exceedingly.' The first hint - and it is scarcely even that until we re-read the poem - comes with her unwillingness to join in Christabel's prayer:

> Praise we the Virgin all divine
> Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
> Alas, alas! said Geraldine
> I cannot speak for weariness.

Christabel's first disquiet occurs as they go into the castle and

past the sleeping mastiff:

> The mastiff old did not awake
> Yet she an angry moan did make....

But even this disquiet seems connected rather with the circumstances of the night than with the actual character of Geraldine. The third stroke is more direct. As they are passing the almost extinguished hall fire,

> .....when the lady passed, there came
> A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
> And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
> And nothing else she saw thereby.

The fourth leaves us in no doubt. Geraldine, fearing the spirit of Christabel's dead mother, the young girl's guardian spirit, bursts out in a tirade against its presence. Coleridge gives the situation an added uncertainty by withholding from us as yet Geraldine's exact intentions. Indeed, whatever they may be, the fatal woman, aware of her own fatality, seems half to regret what she is about to do -

> Even I in my degree will try
> Fair maiden to requite you well. -

and as she undresses,

> Beneath the lamp the lady bowed
> And slowly rolled her eyes around...

As she lies down to sleep beside Christabel she has put by all her scruples:

> In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
> Which is lord of thy utterance Christabel.

They sleep, and

> lo, the worker of these harms,
> That holds the maiden in her arms,
> Seems to slumber still and mild
> As a mother with her child.

- Christabel is to lose her natural father and has found an unnatural mother: the guardian spirit has been worsted. The final image of this passage comes to mind once more, as we shall see, when we hear Bracy's dream of the same night.

In Part One the ground has been prepared: in Part Two the evil of Geraldine begins to operate within Christabel herself. Geraldine 'nothing doubting of her spell / Awakens the lady Christabel.' Christabel has, on the level of the conscious mind, reassured herself and sees her tormentor as 'fairer yet! and yet more fair!', but her unconscious fears become conscious once more as her father embraces Geraldine and the latter prolongs the embrace ' with joyous look':

> Which when she viewed a vision fell
> Upon the soul of Christabel,
> The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
> She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again.....
> Again she saw that bosom old,
> Again she saw that bosom cold
> And drew in her breath with a hissing sound.

It is the hissing of a horrified intake of breath, but its significance becomes deepened when Bracy the Bard tells his story and with what follows. During the night he has dreamed that he saw the tame dove which bears Christabel's name

> Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan.....
> I stopped, methought the dove to take,
> When lo! I saw a bright green snake
> Coiled around its wings and neck.....
> And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
> Swelling its neck as she swells hers!

This moment is one of the most startling touches in the poem. We are recalled by the image to that of the two sleeping together; we see in the movement of the snake an attempt to <u>imitate</u> that of the bird as well as to prevent its flight; we

remember that the sound Christabel herself made resembled that of a snake. Just as the full moon that is dulled, holds in a frightful balance the image of health with the image of disease, the latter over-powering the former, so now there is a further frightful balance: we are on the brink of the suggestion that the identity of Christabel is coveted by Geraldine and that Christabel has unconsciously assumed something of the evil identity of the other. We come now to the most important dramatic climax of the whole, when Geraldine is kissed by Sir Leoline and the significance of Bracy's dream jestingly ignored by the knight: Geraldine looks askance at Christabel:

> A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
> And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
> Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye.....
> One moment and the sight was fled! *

Our worst suspicion is now confirmed by what follows:

> But Christabel in dizzy trance,
> Stumbling on the unsteady ground -
> Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound.

She shudders with horror still, but she emits the sound a snake

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* The classic example of the serpent-woman is Lamia. Keats took her from Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy', Part 3, Sect.2, and established her as one of the symbols in the history of the romantic agony of consciousness. She is the object of the pain-pleasure experience - summed up in that rather Swinburnian phrase of Keats 'murmuring of love, and pale with pain.' When she dies, Lycius, the other partner in this masochistic attachment, is also found dead, which is the ultimate logic of masochistic attachment. The idea of personal annihilation gives a fine edge to the masochist's feelings. Thus Keats could write to Fanny Brawne in that letter, in the 'relaxed self abandonment' of which Matthew Arnold found 'something underbred and ignoble': 'I have been astonished that men could die martyrs for religion - I have shuddered at it. I shudder no more - I could be martyr'd for my religion - Love is my religion - I could die for that. I could die for you.' But Fanny Brawne scarcely seems to have been cut out for the role of a Lamia and, at all events, Keats was denied the ultimate voluptuousness of a death-in-love.

(contd.)

would make. Her imagination is so overpowered by'those shrunken serpent's eyes',

'That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind ...'

And not only does she see the image, she feels herself <u>becoming</u> the image:

'...And passively did <u>imitate</u>
That look of dull and treacherous hate,
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance;
Still picturing that look askance
With <u>forced unconscious sympathy</u>...'

The idea has rooted itself in her mind. Despite this fact she still fights against Geraldine's spell by asking her father to send her tormentor away, instead of which he 'leads forth the Lady Geraldine,' symbolically rejecting his own daughter. There is an extremely dramatic propriety about this incident as Sickness and Evil move off together and it completes the psychological fable.

(cont. from previous page)
Later, the serpent was to become one of the stock images for the femme fatale - in 'Christabel' it works in a fully realised manner as psychological detail. One of the stock examples is the following gaudy passage from Sue's 'Les Mystères de Paris' (quoted in 'The Romantic Agony'): 'Le tigre affamé qui bondit et emporte la proie qu'il déchire en rugissant, inspire moins d'horreur que le serpent qui la fascine silencieusement, l'enlace de ses replis inextricables, l'y broie longuement, la sent palpiter sous ses lentes morsures, et semble se repaître autant de ses douleurs que de son sang.' Geraldine seems also to share the characteristics of the vampire, one of the possible metamorphoses of the femme fatale - one wonders whether Edgar Allan Poe, in his story of vampirism, 'Ligeia', did not perhaps unconsciously derive his Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine from the name of Geraldine's father, Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine.

It is interesting to note that Coleridge makes use of the old and familiar basic fable of folk tale and fairy story: the old ruler ignores his wise counsellor, rejects his 'natural' daughter and prefers his unnatural. The same framework is adopted in 'King Lear'; in 'Christabel' one might say Ledine = Lear; Bracy, Kent; Christabel, Cordelia, and that Geraldine unites the roles of Goneril and Regan. The comparison with regard to artistic scope or treatment would be wholly ridiculous, of course, but it is significant that in both Shakespeare and Coleridge none of the protaganists is in him - or herself complex: all are, in a sense, stock figures and therefore near to allegory and to what Mr. Danby in 'Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature' calls 'the unambiguous Morality statement.' One is compelled to see the characters of both 'Lear' and 'Christabel' as symbols relating to Everyman's condition of inner psychological tension - the evil preying on the good, the sick undermining the healthy - which brings us back, in the case of 'Christabel', to M.Breton's statement of the symbolic conflict of the tale of terror, and to the fact that Coleridge's poem is an extremely individual variant on this archetypal pattern.

(iv)

In 'The Ancient Mariner' Coleridge's unique reflection of psychology through natural symbols outweighs his interest in weird suggestion, and in the 1800 version of the poem most of the excesses in the school of terror vein which had been present

in the first version, have been eradicated. We get a general emendation of the more ridiculously naive devices of 'ancientness' and 'simplicity.' In the second and third versions Coleridge put into practice what, in a letter to Southey, he had specified as being necessary to and lacking in Chatterton: 'It appears to me that, strong feeling is not so requisite to an author's being profoundly pathetic as taste and good sense.' These admirable (and, fundamentally, Augustan standards!) caused him to omit entirely the following stanza which is extremely close to Monk Lewis's brand of luridness and far in excess of anything of which Mrs. Radcliffe was ever guilty:

> His bones were black with many a crack,
> All black and bare, I ween;
> Jet-black and bare, save where with rust
> Of mouldy damps and charnel crust,
> They're patch'd with purple and green. *

In the figure of the Mariner Coleridge reverses the traditional role of the fatal man: according to the usual myth he is an outcast and dangerous to all who meet him. But while the Mariner causes the deaths of the crew and remains outside the human community, his ethical vision contributes to the religious beliefs of that community and his ultimate influence is a salutory one. All he retains is the preternatural stare (Schedoni in 'The Italian' has unforgettable eyes and, after him, so has Maturin's Melmoth) and the inner compulsion to go on

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* Lewis comes into the history of 'The Ancient Mariner' in that one of Coleridge's 'sources' for the protaganist was the Wandering Jew in 'The Monk'. Coleridge had reviewed the book in February, 1797.

wandering the earth.

If one were asked to state briefly wherein lies the greatness of the poem, I think one might point to the opening up of perspective on perspective of consciousness, to the passage of spiritual conflict from plane to plane of the personality - in short, we are presented with a poetic statement of Coleridge's words in 'Aids to Reflection': 'If any reflecting mind be surprised that the aids of the Divine Spirit should be deeper than our Consciousness can reach, it must arise from the not having attended sufficiently to the nature and necessary limits of human Consciousness. For the same impossibility exists as to the first acts and movements of our own will - the farthest back our recollection can follow the traces, never leads us to the first foot-mark - the lowest depth that the light of our Consciousness can visit even without a doubtful Glimmering, is still at an unknown distance from the Ground.'

The Mariner's sin is a sin against Nature: by killing the albatross he perverts - to use the phraseology of Martin Buber's 'I and Thou' - the instinctive outgoing <u>THOU</u> of man before external Nature into the limited and deadening <u>IT.</u> This is in turn a crime against his own nature. The introductory remarks of Professor Buber's volume provide an appropriate commentary on the two-fold results of such an action:

'If THOU is said, the I of the combination I - Thou is said along with it.
'If IT is said, the I of the combination I - It is said along with it.
'The primary word I - Thou can only be spoken with the whole being.
'The primary word I - It can never be spoken with the whole being.

The Mariner thus limits and deadens his own nature by doing something which is less than human and with only part of himself. The sin is caused by blindness and committed unconsciously. It is this kind of sin that Baudelaire, in his prose poem 'Fausse Monnaie,' found particularly deadly and on which he made the following comment: 'On n'est jamais excusable d'être méchant, mais il y a quelque mérite a savoir qu'on l'est; et le plus irreparable des vices est de faire le mal par bêtise.' Mr. Robert Penn Warren in his essay 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' 'explains' the killing symbolically in terms of the fall of man, but Mr. Humphry House is more convincing and more concrete when he writes of the sin as a sin of ignorance and 'a violation of a great sanctity at the animal, human and spiritual levels.....gradually declared as the poem proceeds.' He compares the sin with that of Cain in the prose fragment 'The Wanderings of Cain' who Coleridge says was punished by God 'because he neglected to make a proper use of his senses....' ('The Complete Works of S.T.C.' edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 1912. Notes. P289.)

The course of the poem brings the Mariner to the consciousness of the way in which he has sinned, and the

sufferings which he undergoes are necessary to that enlightenment. The chief point of this suffering is not that it is the revenge of a spirit external to himself, but that his wholeness, denied in the act of killing the bird, is being brought painfully back to life.*

We are told of the killing of the bird suddenly as a conclusion to Part One, after the account of the opening of the ship's voyage. The suddenness of the telling suggests the suddenness of the killing:

> "God save thee, ancient Mariner,
> From the fiends that plague thee thus! -
> Why look'st thou so?" - "With my cross-bow
> I shot the Albatross."

The unexpectedness of the action suggests not instinct but thoughtlessness : the putting into practice of a momentary whim, a passing fancy. The murder of the bird contrasts with the sailors' reception when it is first seen, for they hail it 'As if it had been a Christian soul' and 'in God's name.' Coleridge's note characterises the Albatross as 'pious.' We are made to feel the mysterious inter-acting kinship of man and Nature in its appearance, and when Coleridge annotates 'The Ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen' ~~the word~~

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* In embarking upon an analysis of the poem I would like at the outset to note my debt of gratitude to the work done by Professor Livingston Lowes ('The Road to Xanadu'). If one can proceed to aspects of the poem not dealt with there, that is largely because of the pointers Professor Livingstone Lowes has given.

~~'inhospitably' killeth the pious bird of good omen'~~ the word 'inhospitably' has the force of suggesting the rejection of all natural kinship. Part I concludes with the terrible finality of: 'I shot the Albatross.'

The narrative of the poem is regulated by the presence in it of four symbols taken from the world of Nature: sea, wind, sun, moon. The remarkable thing about these four is the way in which they permit us an easy passage between the poem as story and the poem as allegory. On one level they exist in their own right, the sun and the moon stressing the continuity of Nature, the sea and the wind the unexpected elements in it; on a second, they are transformed into participants in the Mariner's internal drama of disintegration and recovery.

At the start of the voyage we begin to leave behind the familiar as the ship loses sight of 'kirk', 'hill' and 'light-house top.' But the sun, which later assumes a terrifying symbolic power, still declares the existence of Nature's continuity.

> The sun came up upon the left,
> Out of the sea came he!
> And he shone bright and on the right
> Went down into the sea.

The introduction of the wind brings the first complete break with familiar things:

> And now the storm-blast came, and he
> Was tyrannous and strong:
> He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
> And chased us south along.

The seascape into which the ship now penetrates prepares us with its romantic strangeness for the unsettling of the spiritual barometer which is to follow.

> And now there came both mist and snow,
> And it grew wonderous cold:
> And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
> As green as emerald.
>
> And through the drifts the snowy clifts
> Did send a dismal sheen:
> Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken -
> The ice was all between.

The Albatross appears and is received 'As if it had been a Christian soul.' The ship breaks out of the sea of ice. The bird is shot. Up to the end of the first part of the poem we are still in the world of 'objective' Nature. Nature now passes into the realm of symbolism and allegory, its objects representing states of soul within the ancient Mariner himself.

When Part II opens we have, as Professor Livingstone Lowes points out, rounded the Cape:

> The sun now rose upon the right:
> Out of the sea came he,
> Still hid in mist, and on the left
> Went down into the sea.

The sense of shock in the new direction of the sun is not completely disturbing, but it is there, and we are meant to feel it as something lingering on under the apparent restoration to normality and good fortune:

> And the good south wind still blew behind,
> But no sweet bird did follow,
> Nor any day for food or play
> Came to the mariners' hollo'.

The bird has gone and a persistent feeling of guilt remains despite the favourable wind. 'Ah wretch!' said they, the bird to slay, / That made the breeze to blow' The sun rises once more, 'Nor dim nor red like God's own head'; ironically the sailors are assured by its appearance, both because it stresses a natural continuity and because it promises more fine weather. That startling image, 'like God's own head,' carries a further weight of suggestion with it: that the sailors should have seen in the sun the presence of an ever-watchful deity, the God who 'made and loveth all' and whose law [redacted] is not to be circumvented. But they gloss over their instinctive feelings which are the pattern of that law, and fall, like the Mariner, into the condition of I-It, into the state of mechanism, the denial and abuse of full human nature. The 'mates' become a mob and a mob which attempts to 'reason' instead of obeying the impulse to disown the crime. The crude modulation of mob-reasoning, from:

> Then all averred, I had killed the bird
> That brought the fog and mist.
> T'was right, said they, such birds to slay,
> That bring the fog and mist.
>
> For all averred, I had killed the bird
> That made the breeze to blow.
> Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
> That made the breeze to blow.

with its uneasy repetition records an awareness in that repetition of the registering of guilt. For whether we realise it or not our uneasy rationalisations do register and leave a wound, a gap in our wholeness. Nemesis follows swiftly in a stanza which opens with the promise of a continued state of

blissful self-deception and ends in spiritual doldrums:

> The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
> The furrow followed free;
> We were the first that ever burst
> Into that silent sea.

If the breeze which the bird caused to blow may be said to be a symbol of the soul's health, the breeze which follows its killing is a state of false healthiness, a satisfaction with surfaces. The word 'surfaces' comes readily to mind perhaps because of the sea symbolism in the poem, which also has power to emphasise the mysterious depths in both external Nature and human nature. A fine symbolical use of the sea occurs in these doldrums which are also something of a Sargasso:

> The very deep did rot: O Christ!
> That ever this should be!
> Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
> Upon the slimy sea.

Here the breeze, which is a health-giving power in the poem, never blows. The 'bloody Sun' in a copper sky has lost its essential 'sunniness' and appears 'no bigger than the Moon.' The frame of Nature, as in 'King Lear', has been wrenched, and its wrenching conveys what is going on in the soul of the Mariner. The spiritual doldrums signifies a slow and unconscious reaction to a sense of guilt within:

> And some in dreams assured were
> Of the spirit that plagued us so;
> Nine fathoms deep he had followed us
> From the land of mist and snow.

Water, dreams, disintegration, ('The very deep did rot'): We are in the inner domain of psychology. The unconscious

reaction against a common crime, the re-assertion, that is, of laws pattern within the soul, works in the direction of full consciousness through the growing awareness of self-disgust and the pain which disintegration brings about. There are two modes of unconscious 'action' in the poem: the bad unconscious, mechanical action of the Mariner in killing the bird, and the good, vital unconscious action when he watches the water snakes, perceives their beauty and '(blesses) them unaware.' The psychological geography of the poem also contains two kinds of sea*: the wild, unknown element on which the ship sails and the static, stagnating deep which 'rots'. The Spirit of which 'some in dreams assured were' comes from the first sea, that is from the realm of the good unconscious. It is 'one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels.' We may equate it, 'nine-fathoms deep' in the sea of the unconscious self, with the Spirit of Conscience, of instinctive justice which brings our nature to health and wholeness even if it first has to wrench its frame in neurosis. The deep which rots represents our own vital energies made static by spiritual illness. This power of suggestion in the poem is one of its greatnesses and one of its specifically 'Romantic' qualities. For it

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* Mr. Penn Warren further develops the symbolism of two lights: e.g., the glorious Sun, like 'God's own head' and 'The bloody sun.' Mr. Humphrey House notes 'the dual character of the ice'..... 'the emerald and the dismal sheen.' ('Coleridge' Chap. IV.)

is in Romantic and Post-Romantic literature that the workings of the unconscious came to be recognised as one of the principal themes of the artist, and as Lionel Trilling has noted, out of Romanticism grew psychoanalysis. In 'Freud and Literature', he speaks of psychoanalysis as 'one of the culminations of the Romantic literature of the nineteenth century.' 'If', he continues, 'there is perhaps a contradiction in the idea of a science standing up on the shoulders of a literature which avows itself inimical to science in so many ways, the contradiction will be resolved if we remember that this literature, despite its avowals, was itself scientific in at least the sense of being passionately devoted to a research into the self.' Of the nature of the unconscious in this literature he goes on to tell us:'.... the idea of a hidden thing went forward to become one of the dominant notions of the age. The hidden element takes many forms, and it is not necessarily 'dark' and 'bad'; for Blake the 'bad' was 'good', while for Wordsworth and Burke what was hidden and unconscious was wisdom and power, which work on in despite of the conscious intellect.'

Part II of 'The Ancient Mariner' ends with his recognition of guilt. The others make him their scape-goat and hang the bird round his neck. The incident is of great importance and decides what is to follow. It signifies, on the story level of the poem, the kind of thing a real mob will do in actual fact, and, on the level of allegory, the unconscious elements in Everyman (the drama is gradually centring entirely upon the

Mariner) pushing his guilt into consciousness and forcing the conscious mind to accept its existence. The recognition of guilt makes possible a step forward spiritually, but it is a step in the direction of more pain and accompanied by the feeling of utter solitude. Consciousness now has to live with its sense of guilt. It has both to live with it and then be able to go beyond it. For to live under the burden of a sense of guilt restricts one from, in any real sense of the word, <u>living</u> at all, by preventing the completely vital expression of one's human nature from an untrammeled source, from the unconscious springs of a positive humanity. The out-going and creative <u>Thou</u> can only be said with difficulty, for one is too bound up in the problems of one's own ego. One must, after passing through this phase of introverted <u>consciousness</u>, as something necessary to the next step and inevitable as a result of what has gone before, be able to resolve the feeling of guilt. The final balance will come about through a right relationship between unconsciousness and consciousness, but this balance will have to take its place of origin in the depths of man, the healthful unconscious: it can never be imposed from above or without. Thus, in the poem a good unconscious action (the blessing of the water snakes) counteracts a bad one (the killing of the albatross), dispelling the crippling sense of guilt.

Part III of 'The Ancient Mariner' describes the Mariner's conscious experience of guilt and isolation: 'Each turned his face with ghastly pang / And cursed me with his eye.' It is symbolically right that the entire crew should die to make

complete the Mariner's solitude; it is right because, though he has forfeited the feeling of community, he is no longer merely one of a mob and it is right also because he has broken off the kind of relationship that formerly existed between his actions and the mechanical aspect of his unconscious.

The chief incident which takes place in Part III is the appearance of the ghost ship and the feeling of crisis which this incident brings in:

> And straight the Sun was flecked with bars
> (Heaven's mother send us grace!)
> As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
> With broad and burning face.

The Sun, the source of warmth and life, a symbol which belongs on the positive side of the poem's symbology, on the side of the good unconscious, is threatened. The Spectre-Woman wins the soul of the Mariner in the dice game; 'The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out: /At one stride comes the dark' and the Sun does not make its appearance in the poem again until the song of the blessed spirits who inhabit the bodies of the dead sailors in Part V.

The Spectre-Woman is identified by the poet as being 'The Night-mare Life-in-Death..../Who thicks man's blood with cold.'* She is precisely the objectification of that state of sickness into which the Mariner has now passed: the others are dead but he, by the acceptance of his guilt, hovers in the state of life-in-death, the sources of his real living-ness as yet unrenewed.

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* Cp. Coleridge's comment on himself in his epitaph: he asks the passer-by for a prayer

> That he who many a year with toil of breath
> Found death in life, may here find life in death.

The repetition of the word 'blood' in the poem is by no means accidental: it blends into the notion, which is behind the work, of the pristine unconscious containing the clue to real living. The Mariner wishes to have his soul shrived, to 'wash away/ The Albatross's blood' In order to moisten his mouth sufficiently to call out to the ghost ship, he bites his arm and sucks the blood. The Spectre-Woman 'thicks men's blood with cold,' putting them into a condition of life-in-death. She wins the Mariner in the game of dice against her Death-mate, and he describes how

> Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
> My life-blood seemed to sip.

The sudden motion of the boat in Part V flings the 'blood into (his) head.'

The Mariner has been won by the Night-mare Life-in-Death and the sun has disappeared. At this point in the poem, simultaneously with his greatest sufferings and his greatest loneliness, the healing process begins. It is symbolised by the dual symbol of the moon appearing for the first time:

> The stars were dim, and thick the night...
> Till cloam above the eastern bar
> The horned Moon, with one bright star
> Within the nether tip.

In traditional popular belief the moon is credited with being at once a symbol of sickness and of healing. It is on the appearance of the moon that the crew of the boat is struck dead, but its positive power is nevertheless implicit in that it reveals another aspect of that natural continuity which seems in

danger of complete rupture with the disappearance of the sun, the stars' sudden rushing out, and the dark coming in one stride. The continuity is re-asserted by the moon's taking over from the sun the offices of light. Its light is a light that kills and also one that heals, this second power being stressed by the presence of 'one bright star / within the nether tip.'

No immediate surface change accompanies this slow process of healing, for in Part IV the deep still rots, 'a thousand slimy things/ (Live) on', and the isolation of the Mariner is made final and complete:

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on the wide, wide sea!
> And never a saint took pity on
> My soul in agony.

His vital and spiritual powers are so reduced that he cannot pray:

> I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
> But or ever a prayer had gusht,
> A wicked whisper came and made
> My heart as dry as dust.

His awareness of guilt has grown more and more extreme:

> An orphan's curse would drag to hell
> A spirit from on high;
> But oh! more horrible than that
> Is the curse of a dead man's eye!
> Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
> And yet I could not die.

At the end of that time the moon shows itself for the second time and this time its positive influence appears at once in the movement of the verse - the moon is also described as going 'softly' up the sky - and in the poet's description of the

effect of its shining on the sea. The Mariner feels, in watching the moon and stars, a returning awareness of the harmony of Nature: Coleridge in his note tells us '(they) still sojourn, yet still move onward and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural home....' In the light of the moon he watches the movements of the water-snakes, and as he does so, all feeling of anxiety leaves him; he loses himself and his concern with himself in regarding Nature, and suddenly, 'unaware', he has unconsciously spoken the outgoing Thou which brings release:

> O happy living things! No tongue
> Their beauty might declare;
> A spring of love gushed from my heart
> And I blessed them unaware:
> Sure my kind saint took pity on me
> And I blessed them unaware.
>
> The selfsame moment I could pray;
> And from my neck so free
> The Albatross fell off, and sank
> Like lead into the sea.

Like Leontes at the conclusion of 'A Winter's Tale', he awakens his faith and grace suddenly happens to him. And, as in Shakespeare's 'Tempest' the refreshing power of grace is symbolised by water, by the rain that comes after he has fallen asleep at the opening of Part V:

> O sleep! it is a gentle thing,
> Beloved from pole to pole
> To Mary queen the praise be given!
> She sent the gentle sleep from heaven,
> That slid into my soul.
>
> The silly buckets on the deck,
> That had so long remained,
> I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
> And when I woke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams
And still my body drank.

The forces of healing, sleep, the moon, 'a roaring wind,' combine in this section and there occur 'commotions in the sky and elements.' but it is no longer the commotion of disintegration. The condition of life-in-death is being transformed into real life .

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

The 'death-fires' of Part II have been superseded.

The storm which follows does not offer any threat to the safety of the ship. It symbolises the new release of elemental powers and the return of something akin to the mysterious forces of Nature within the Mariner:

And the coming wind did roar more loud
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side;
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of the ship's crew are now inhabited by 'a troop of spirits blessed' which take charge of the ship once more and their song which 'darted to the sun' (this is the first mention of the sun since its disappearance in Part III) brings to mind in the Mariner the image of a calm, healing Nature where there is a harmony between the various elements in the natural scene.

In its context the passage suggests the freshness of experiencing Nature after long seclusion from it - the first country walk, perhaps, after a long period of illness:

> Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
> I heard the sky-lark sing;
> Sometimes all little birds that are,
> How they seemed to fill the sea and air
> With their sweet jargoning!
>
> And now t'was like all instruments,
> Now like a lonely flute;
> And now it is an angel's song,
> That makes the heavens be mute.
>
> It ceased; yet still the sails made on
> A pleasant noise till noon,
> A noise like of a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune.

But, in spite of this, the illness has not yet passed, a fact which is emphasised most effectively by the poet, in that, although there is a roaring wind, 'It did not come anear'; in that it was its sound and not its actual force which 'shook the sails/ That were so thin and sear.' Again, there is a vivid impression here of the confrontation of health and lingering illness, the 'thin and sear' sails impressing upon us the mental and physical state of the Mariner, i.e. that the processes of his nature are still impaired and his debility is still such that his 'sails' cannot take the full force of Nature's directing power. The ship moves on with 'never a breeze'; it is being moved by the <u>insistence</u> of conscience rather than by the free powers of an integrated nature:

Under the keel nine fathoms deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.

There follows a convincing account of the final stages of a mental illness: the Mariner falls back into a 'swound' and

....ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

The two voices describe the last stages of expiation and integration. We are warned, however, that more penance is still to be done. The dialogue of the two voices in Part VI opens with the new relation of Moon to Ocean, of the symbol of healing to the symbol of the unconscious:

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast -

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him'

- and the word 'graciously' is to be taken in its religious meaning as reinforcing the effect of the rain in Part V where the note reads: 'By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.'

On the disappearance of the two spirits the Mariner awakes and undergoes the penance that is still to be done. He faces, for the last time, the accusation of the 'stony eyes' of his mates. In dying they had 'cursed' him into the complete solitariness of guilt and self-consciousness; in his living alone with this guilt,

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away.

But Nature has been satisfied: 'And now the spell was snapt.' For the first time since his revival the breeze blows upon him and he feels himself back in the stream of natural life:

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring -
It mingled strangely with my fears
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swfitly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze -
On me alone it blew.

And with the breeze appears once again the familiar landscape of kirk, hill, and lighthouse top, bathed in healing and calm moonlight:

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic spirits have brought him to the end of his voyage of self-discovery and leave the dead bodies. The sixth section ends with the appearance of three new characters in the poem, the pilot, the Pilot's boy and the Hermit.

It is in the seventh and last part of 'The Ancient Mariner' that the ship sinks and is received along with its crew back into the element of the unconscious. The Mariner's first contact with other people takes place in circumstances of strangeness

and horror. The Holy Hermit, a representative of no church, but the priest of Nature itself, hesitates to shrieve him. Though the Mariner has realised to the full the consequences of his crime, the memory of it still persists in the form of a penance, but what began as a psychological problem within himself ends as an ethical responsibility towards people other than himself. He must wander about the world without a home, like the Wandering Jew and the Flying Dutchman, constrained by an agony 'to travel from land to land' and teach others the truth of man's relations with Nature:

> I pass like night, from land to land;
> I have strange power of speech;
> That moment that his face I see,
> I know the man that must hear me:
> To him my tale I teach.

Although the agony still returns and although the Mariner has known that loneliness where 'God himself / scarce seemed..... to be,' he is now permitted a vision of that in which the life of human community consists:

> O sweeter than the marriage feast,
> 'Tis sweeter far to me,
> To walk together to the kirk
> With a goodly company! -
>
> To walk together to the kirk
> And altogether pray,
> While each to his great Father bends,
> Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
> And youths and maidens gay.

If, in the first place, his crime caused him to be cursed, it has, through his subsequent expiation and realisation of the depth of his guilt, of the need for community between man and Nature, caused him to be chosen. He is chosen from among his

kind, as the poet is chosen, to tell his tale, 'to teach by his own example love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth'. In this sense the Mariner symbolises the poet who, for the Romantic, establishes truths by inspiring emotions. He is the poet who, through falling sick of the same diseases that afflict his audience, may act as their physician because of his deeper experience of the intensity and his intuitive knowledge of the nature of their common sickness.

* * *

In 'Kubla Khan' we feel again the unconscious described in its rôle in the flow of the creative act, as one of the elements in poetic composition, and symbolised there by the current of the sacred river which springs from the darkness of the chasm, the unconscious. The source of the river is unknown: we only know that, like the river itself, it must be sacred. It is not possible here to apply the conclusion of Pope's 'Essay on Man' - 'And all our knowledge is, - ourselves to know' - written, as it was, in terms of a limited, eighteenth-century awareness. One of the effects of Romanticism was to qualify the maxim 'Know thyself' by recognising the possible extent and the necessary limits of self-knowledge. As D.H. Lawrence writes: 'To know, is to lose. When I have a finished mental concept of a beloved or a friend, then the love and the friendship is dead. It falls to the level of an acquaintance. As soon as I have a finished mental concept, a full idea even of myself, then dynamically I am dead. To know is to die ('Fantasia of the Unconscious'). But in qualification

and clarification he could also write: 'Know deeply, know thyself more deeply - go deeper than love, for the soul has greater depths.... Go down to your deep old heart, woman, and lose yourself.....Let us lose sight of ourselves, and break the mirrors' ('Pansies'). And Lawrence's restatement, like that of the Romantics, was in terms of an increased awareness of the importance and depth of the unconscious root of our being.

More of man exists than is dreamed of in Pope's philosophy: life and creativity flow towards 'caverns measureless to man' and ascend from depths which are not knowable and whose existence the eighteenth century had tended to ignore:

> And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil ~~toil~~ seething,
> As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
> A mighty fountain momently was forced
> Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
> Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
> Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
> And mid those dancing rocks at once and ever
> It flung up momently the sacred river.

'With ceaseless turmoil seething' suggests to us the bursting forth of long repressed energies such as are released and championed in Blake's 'Marriage of Heaven and Hell'; 'a mighty fountain' the positive and beautiful aspect of this release of instincts; 'the huge fragments' and 'dancing rocks' its strangeness and its wildness, its threat to restriction and simplification. I have said that the picture of the creative act imaged in 'Kubla Khan' brings the deposited elements of the second or mechanical unconscious into a vivifying contact with the stream of the first unconscious. This attitude to the nature of poetic imagery is fundamentally to Coleridge's aesthetic attitude. His valuable dis tinction between Fancy and Secondary Imagination

(the creative Imagination) distinguishes his thought from that development of a similar attitude to imagery in the critical writings of the surrealists. With the surrealists the chance collisions of disparate notions thrown up from the mechanical unconscious are the life of their art. Fancy displaces Imagination; the sacred river becomes a stream of arbitrary connections, often wittily combined but never to be equated with Coleridgean Imagination in which both levels of the unconscious come into play, as in 'Kubla Khan.' Here the whole man is implicated in the act of creation and though one is not altogether easy about the figure with 'flashing eyes and floating hair', there is nothing incomplete in the conception of an 'unconscious' at work. We are pointed forward to the remark in Lecture XIII of 1818: 'There is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay, that is the genius in the man of genius.

If the creative life, as symbolised by the sacred river is a flow, it is a flow out of the depths of ones being towards Nature. The intensity with which man experiences Nature is, according to Coleridge, one of the measures of his vitality. In 'Dejection: an Ode' to 'see, not feel' its beauty means that the vital flow has been interrupted and that an element of mechanism has intervened.

In 'Dejection' the death of the Albatross is reinacted in the killing of the spontaneous impulses by the conscious mind. These impulses, as Coleridge recognises, are the source of his poetry and of his real, lived experience. What has been suspended in his being is '(His) shaping spirit of Imagination', the

creative unconscious which is the root of all art and of all living. His sense of failing power did not prevent Coleridge from writing a great poem, but it limited the kind of greatness.

There is a degree of imperfection about all Coleridge's finest poems, an imperfection that is more than marginal. John Stuart Mill speaks of Coleridge as being among the greatest names in our literature 'if we look to the powers shown rather than the amount of actual achievement,' a judgment always to be borne in mind. His weakness may be the poem's fragmentariness as in 'Kubla Khan', or a different kind of failing as in those parts of 'The Ancient Mariner' - the incident of the Pilot's Boy's madness for example - where the feeling is exaggerated and the rhythms fail. 'Dejection', also, tends to fall away from the rich complexity it promises and, in part, achieves. After six remarkable and sober verses, Coleridge begins to put 'feeling' into the seventh stanza of this Ode, and one observes in the vocabulary of 'rave', 'scream', 'agony', 'mad Lutanist' - there are two uses of 'rave', a Shelleyan weakness - the conscious forcing of emotion which does not exist <u>in itself</u>. The storm subsides into a pathetic strain and overstatement changes to sentimentality in the image of the lost child who

.....now moans low in bitter grief and fear
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

The fineness of the rest, however, makes it possible to apply the word 'great' to 'Dejection' without a denial of critical principles We find, for example, a great insight into the workings of the

human psyche.

I may not hope from outward forms to win

The passion and the life whose fountains are within

- once more, as in 'Kubla Khan', the image of the fountain.

Coleridge was experiencing at the time of writing the poem, a form of life-in-death. It was different in kind from that of the Mariner, but its operation was largely the same in that the flow between unconscious and conscious existence had been arrested. He no longer feels himself to be actively alive. He is afflicted by a 'dull pain', 'A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear, /A stifled, drowsy unimpassioned grief,' 'his eyes blank'; '(his) genial spirits fail'. From this state he can find no 'natural outlet'. He cannot, that is, go out from himself towards Nature whose sights no longer '(send his) soul abroad.'

Coleridge sees the cause for his dilemma in the tyranny of what Blake calls analytical Reason, in his philosophizing:*

> There was a time when, though my path was rough,
> This joy within me dallied with distress,
> And all misfortunes were as but the stuff
> Whence fancy made me dreams of happiness:
> For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
> And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
> But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
> Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,

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* There is the hint in the version of the Ode published by Professor de Selincourt ('Wordsworthian and other studies,' 1947) that the cause for over-indulgence in philosophy proceeded from Coleridge's 'coarse domestic life' which 'has known/..... No griefs but such as dull and deaden me.'

> But oh! each visitation
> Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
> My shaping spirit of imagination.
> For not to think of what I needs must feel,
> But to be still and patient all I can;
> And haply by abstruse research to steal
> From my own nature all the natural man -
> This was, sole resource, my only plan:
> Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
> And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

The play in 'And haply by abstruse research to steal / From my own nature all the natural man' is bitterly ironical. In the Christian scheme of things our fallen nature (**natural** man) does not prevent us from realising in some measure our real nature. The irony in the line is a kind of pagan irony against a Christian concept: in attempting to steal from himself 'all the natural (i.e. fallen) man', he has removed what really was natural - he has crippled his own essential nature.

The result of this negative action leads, however, to a positive formulation of the terms of man's relationship with external Nature and the way in which he finds his own true nature in that relationship. One of the dangers of Romanticism is that man tends to lose his place in Nature and merely to be dominated by the landscape:

> I live not in myself but I become
> Portion of that around me, and to me
> High mountains are a feeling.

The success of Coleridge and Wordsworth, as 'Romantics' and as Nature poets, lies in their clear division of human from external Nature, yet in their intuition of the link between them. Coleridge's formulation stresses this division as being the foundation of the

true relationship between man and his environment.

> These sounds which oft have raised me whilst they awed,
> And sent my soul abroad.

His soul has not gone abroad to mingle in the universal soul, to lose itself in Nature: it has gone abroad to act upon Nature.* In his lifeless state of 'dull pain' without 'natural outlet' he looks at the beauties of moon and sky:

> I see them all so excellently fair
> I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

If his own nature were 'natural' the 'fountains (which) are within' would play outwards upon Nature. Nature would be acted upon by him and he draw life from this action in speaking the I of the I-Thou:

> O Lady! we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does nature live:
> Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!....
> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the earth...

But this rapport with Nature is only possible when a man acts in his wholeness, when 'we in ourselves rejoice', as the poet says. The clue to the rapport is the existence of joy in the pure flow of being from an inward at-oneness:

> .....Joy that ne'er was given
> Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
> Life, and life's effluence, cloud at once and shower.
> Joy, Lady, is the spirit and the power
> Which wedding nature to us gives in dower,
> A new Earth and a new Heaven,
> Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud -
> Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud -
> We in ourselves rejoice! ....

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* This is the principle of Coleridge's 'Secondary Imagination' in Chapter XIII of the 'Biographia Literaria.'

It is a moral and psychological insight of this kind which makes the poem impressive reading. An approach to such insight implies the restoration of an adequate conception of in what wholeness consists. Through his understanding of the basic essentials of human wholeness, of its flow from the root into the branches, and his ability to express this and the factors in living which oppose it, Coleridge was able to confront in his art the nature that says 'Thou' with the great containing Nature outside itself. Of those poets among the Romantics who felt the dividing lure of Sensibility it was Coleridge alone who undertook to plot in prose and verse the essential unity of individual consciousness.

.....oOo.....

CHAPTER TWO

NATURE, CHILDHOOD AND TRADITION:

a study in the poetry of William Wordsworth

(i)

Wordsworth, as the schoolboy is told, believed in the spontaneity of the feelings. The object of this second chapter will be to question how far Wordsworth accepted an unqualified spontaneity and to establish in what his qualifications consisted. One can approach this topic by asking what sort of readers Wordsworth desired* and what kind of capacity for spontaneous feeling he wished to find in them. The opening of the epitaph on Matthew enlightens us here:

> If Nature for a favourite child
> In thee hath tempered so her clay,
> That every hour thy heart runs wild,
> Yet never once doth go astray,
>
> Read o'er these lines...

for in this we have a picture of the organic sensibility in which childhood joy is taken up into adult awareness, a picture of balanced normality. Spontaneity does not entail for Wordsworth a denial of adult consciousness but an extension of it. An example of the wrong kind of Romantic

* A further aspect of this question has been explored in John F. Danby's "The Simple Wordsworth" ("The Cambridge Journal", January, 1953).

'feeling' which does, in fact, deny adult consciousness, is to be found in Keats last sonnet:

> Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
> And so live ever - or else swoon to death.

- an emotional attitude which D. H. Lawrence briefly summed up as 'mixing the eggshell in with the omelette'. This unscrutinised, adolescent lushness would be more exactly described as willed feeling rather than spontaneity and it is willed feeling that Wordsworthian measure principally opposes.

In the course of this chapter I hope to show two of the things which for Wordsworth gave meaning to spontaneity: the first, his conception of moral growth which incorporates it into the organic sensibility; the second, 'traditionary sympathies' which incorporate it into the pattern of society.

(ii)

Let us begin by moving over familiar but perenially fruitful ground - in short, by considering Wordsworth's rainbow. One is perpetually surprised to find how a hackneyed line or a poem continues to live and even to surprise with something approaching that consciousness of delight when one first discovered it, despite all those associations which combine to cheapen it and to blur its impact. 'The child is father of the man' is venerable enough to find its way into dictionaries of quotations and current enough to appear in crossword puzzles, yet one can still go back to Wordsworth's poem and there the paradox stands in all its pristine truthfulness, its newness of discovery. Its truth is that newness. The

poem expresses the persistance of spontaneous vision into manhood; it shows us the spontaneous vision of manhood in action, vivid, wondering, still fresh despite the passage of years, and following straight upon this, the general conclusion: 'The child is father of the man'. Re-reading the poem one is enabled to seize upon that truth once more. A truth is either sparkling with life or it is nothing, the mechanical repetition of a dead phrase which has ceased to affect the pulses or to implicate the heart. We no longer believe it. We accept it, perhaps, but we are unresponsive to its real moment, its fire-brand quality. Then we are permitted by some such means as re-reading a poem or seeing a picture in a certain mood, to re-approach that truth, and the heart leaps up as we behold it. We have rediscovered it and we have rediscovered a lost portion of ourselves.

The truth of the poet's conclusion in 'To a Rainbow' gains in intensity once one is able to feel, in reading the poem, the whole weight of 'The Prelude' behind it. The connection between this latter and the projected 'Recluse' Wordsworth conceived as that which 'the ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic Church', adding that his 'minor Pieces which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader, to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses,

ordinarily included in those edifices'. In 'To a Rainbow' we have in small what 'The Prelude' explores at length. It is not a 'simple' poem. It is not, above all, a poem for children although it appears still in most junior-school anthologies (it is supposed to be eminently teachable to under-tens). The element of introspection in the poem is completely foreign to the child and, although it is a poem about spontaneity, this kind of introspection, while it enriches adult experience and links it with the experience of childhood, would cripple the kind of spontaneity of which a child is capable. We see the man looking back, or rather feeling his way back, to childhood and perceiving, with sudden illumination, the way his many days have been 'Bound each to each by natural piety'. Natural piety has always resided deep in his unconscious being and it has bound together his developing and expanding nature. The spontaneous joy felt as a child when seeing the rainbow returns again, but it is now the joy of a man, a joy which can be related to the whole picture of growing consciousness. Manhood, unlike childhood must know itself, and its self-knowledge must exist side by side with a forever renewed spontaneity, making this knowledge dynamic and creative in order to further the process of living:

> So be it when I shall grow old
> Or let me die!

As in Coleridge's great ode, so in Wordsworth's poem, the clue to living awareness is joy and this joy is rooted in that

first gift of childhood, the ability to look at the outside world with wonder and as if for the first time:

> How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
> That has such people in't!

We cannot, of course, always look at the world with wonder, but grow stale with the repetitions of existence, with getting and spending. This is the mood in which Wordsworth returns from the city at the beginning of 'The Prelude', suffering from that sickness which since his day has grown so general and so terrifyingly mortal. Coming north once more, he experiences the healing powers of Nature and the rebirth of joy:

> Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
> A visitant that while it fans my cheek
> Doth seem half conscious of the joy it brings
> From the green fields and from yon azure sky.
> Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can come
> To none more grateful than to me; escaped
> From the vast city...
> Trances of thought and mountings of the mind
> Come fast upon me: it is shaken off,
> That burden of my own own unnatural self,
> The heavy weight of many a weary day
> Not mine, and such as were not made for me.

The return to the countryside of his childhood brings renewal and the clear links shine between past and present. In the city his days break those links. Now he feels again his days bound each to each and we know that, natural piety which binds them has always been there, latent if unconscious. It is the image of binding that dominates this first book of 'The Prelude', the image of gathering together the natural powers in all their

composite strength, the image of tracing back the 'natural' and 'paramount' links in all their complexity and unity - a unity which time may seem to blur, but which is, nevertheless, at the back of our real individuality.

The passages on the difficulty of selecting a subject for the poem are very important, both to our theme - the nature of the spontaneous act - and to the poem as a whole. They are not something to be 'skipped' in order to get more quickly to the 'fine' passages, the anthologized snippets. The act of binding together what is 'paramount' implies the act of rejecting what is not. The heart leaps up when it beholds a rainbow: we know at once what the heart 'thinks' about it. But it is a much more difficult business to find out what the heart thinks of a subject for a lengthy poem; it is much more difficult to find out what our basic feelings are on the matter and not to be led astray by the passing interest of the conscious mind. One has to go deeper than the conscious mind. One has to spend many days in thought and one has to think, as Lawrence and Yeats would say, with the blood. Wordsworth describes the slow processes of resolution and indecision, of thought and feeling which preceded the composition of 'The Prelude'. He does so because it is part of his subject, the stating of what is natural and what is basic in human life and the rejection of sophistication, of that which is not. 'The Prelude' was undertaken because

it was the most natural thing that Wordsworth should do. But spontaneity does not always travel on the surface: it must be sought for in a sea of tangled ideas and exotic submarine life that attract the fancy's eye but are not ones primary object. What is important and what is not? What is oneself and what is the echo of the other man's voice, the other man's book, the other man's poem? One cannot at once be sure. 'Thus' says Wordsworth,

> my days are past
> In contradiction; with no skill to part
> Vague longing, haply bred by want of power,
> From paramount impulse not to be withstood,
> A timorous capacity from prudence,
> From circumspection infinite delay.

The writing of a poem means an extension of self-knowledge and it is often a disenchanting revelation of the mind's self-importance, an uncovering of poses and mental attitudes - all factors which overlay and disguise what one is after. Wordsworth describes the process of this discovery of ones own mental tricks, ones ulterior motives, with absolute accuracy:

> Humility and modest awe themselves
> Betray me, serving often for a cloak
> To a more subtle selfishness; that now
> Locks every function up in blank reserve,
> Now dupes me, trusting to an anxious eye
> That with intrusive restlessness beats off
> Simplicity and self-presented truth.

He perceives these false motives and rejects them. He rejects also the possible subjects that present themselves among his thoughts. The poet, we recall from the Preface to the

Lyrical Ballads, 'has acquired a greater readiness and power (i.e., than other man) in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement'. The end of the process of selection comes with his arrival at the real subject of his researches. Rejecting all the scraps of mental experience, the sentimentalities, the curiosities, the delightful fragments, he discovers something which is not merely 'vague longing': he perceives the links which bind his days and his personality into one and these links he will transcribe as the basis for his art. The essential structure of his own life is to supply the essential structure of the poem.

The transition from the introduction to the subject takes place as though it were a process of mind that we were observing: it takes place with the mention of the River Derwent that seems symbolically and implicitly to blend past and present into a flow as it revives yet another memory. It runs both from childhood to the present, and away from the 'vain perplexity' of indecision to the resolved theme of the work:

> Was it for this
> That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
> To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
> And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
> And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
> That flowed along my dreams? For this didst thou,
> O Derwent! winding among grassy holms
> Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,
> Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
> To more than infant softness, giving me
> Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
> A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
> That Nature breathes among the hills and groves!

The river which had 'flowed along (his) dreams' as a child, brings into play as it were, his unconscious being. The memory has complete psychological validity. It puts him back in touch with the source of his paramount existence in childhood and in the unconscious mind. The vocabulary of 'blend', 'flowed', 'dreams' opens up associations (perhaps even stronger for us today than for the reading public of the nineteenth century) with the domain of the unconscious and the nature of human psychology.

The river marks the first important transition of the poem. It is first of all described, moreover, as the child felt it; not as the adult beholds it, objectively and at a distance, but in terms of a flow inwards, from Nature, a something which seizes upon the baby's attention. This attention is still passive, largely unconscious, and not as yet directed outwards by the awakened mind. Nature flows inward to form that mind, to make it attend, to waken it into activity, to delight it and by delighting, to make it curious to begin its first explorations into the great, outer universe. In the poem - so rightly - the voice of the river blends with the voice of the nurse: they are both, in terms of <u>mental</u> awareness, undifferentiated presences, hovering comfortingly at the edge of that darkness out of which the consciousness is slowly coming into existence. They are <u>felt</u> presences, their existence affecting not the eye or the fancy, but the receptive

faculties of the child's primary activities. The soothing river-sound flows into its half-consciousness that is always hesitating on the brink of sleep and brings it into contact with one of the great rhythms of Nature, imprinting a harmony upon the first faculties and composing the sleep into which they so easily return. The structure which Wordsworth is to reveal to us begins with the infant consciousness. The harmony experienced by the infant is the first step toward that natural piety which binds his days each to each.

The binding process is seen by the poet as the primal creative movement of the soul, the aim of all discipline, the dynamic structure of all spiritual growth - growth, that is, which feels 'That whatsoever point they (the faculties) gain, they yet / Have something to pursue'. The movement and rhythm of Book One constitute a transcription into art of the gathering movement of experience, the surge forward through incident and event, the drawing in of the soul's riches and the valuing of them in contemplation. After contemplation ensue further incident and event, memorable experience of Nature or even 'chance collisions and quaint accidents': the entire process consists in bringing the self into harmony, of establishing, in the words of the introduction to 'The Excursion' the 'great Consummation' between Nature and human nature in a delicate and dynamic balance. All begins with the stream issuing from 'the blind cavern whence is heard / Its

natal murmur' (Book Fourteen). Each link joins us to the vital experiences of youth. Each is a transmitter of the primal spontaneity. And in the impetus of the poem one feels the positiveness of the human creative process communicated in the vocabularly of building and unification: we have 'The bond of union between life and joy'; beauty and fear 'combine' to shape 'the immortal spirit', discordant elements are reconciled, interfuse and 'cling together in one society'; 'The passions that build up our human soul' are 'intertwined' 'with high objects, with enduring things'; Natural forms are bound to the affections by 'invisible links'. We are told later of

> that interminable building reared
> By observation of affinities
> In objects where no brotherhood exists
> To passive minds. (Book Two)

And in Book Seven, amid the relative chaos of urban life, Wordsworth returns again to this image pattern, as he stresses

> the ties
> That bind the perishable hours of life
> Each to the other, and the curious props
> By which the world of memory and thought
> Exists and is sustained.

Among Wordsworth's earliest recollections beauty and fear join in 'making up / The calm existence that is mine when I / Am worthy of myself'. The incidents of hunting for woodcocks by night and of looking for ravens' eggs on the perilous ridge where 'the sky seemed not a sky of earth', imprint these dual aspects upon the soul and give place to the great passage of

contemplative evaluation from which we have quoted:

> Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
> Like harmony in music; there is a dark
> Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
> Discordant elements, makes them cling together
> In one society. How strange that all
> The terrors, pains and early miseries,
> Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
> Within my mind...

The phrase 'a dark / Inscrutable workmanship' is important and the word 'dark' is no mere accident or loose evocative jargon. The workmanship is dark because it is unconscious, because it occurs where our life and individuality take their rise, beneath the surface of mind and will. A 'calm existence' can never come about of itself in the head, nor can it be willed into being, for it depends upon our ability to remain open to the influx of dynamic forces from the unconscious. One of the greatnesses of Wordsworth's poetry, as of Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner', is the realisation of the depths of our unconscious being and of its part in human life: it provides at once the common ground we share with our childhood and the unifying principle of our individuality:

> O man!
> The prime and vital principle is thine
> In the recesses of thy nature, far
> From any reach of outward fellowship
> Else is not thine at all. (Book Fourteen)

In no other writer before Lawrence is the unconscious used to such an extent as the specifically creative and restorative power and to emphasise the mystery of human personality:

> Points have we all within our souls
> Where all stand single; this I feel, and make
> Breathings for incommunicable powers.
> (Book Three)

This element of the unknown was clearly one of the attractions for readers like Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill, as for the general public it was one of the difficulties. Thus, in the late Victorian Gall and Inglis Edition of 'The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth', 'The Prelude' is omitted and the editor assures us, 'The poem belongs to the class called metaphysical; and high though its merit in that kind be, it is neither interesting, nor indeed in many parts intelligible, except to those who besides possessing an inward life of their own, have acquired some experience in the analysis of mental states'. There was manifestly something unintelligibly mysterious in what Wordsworth had to say - psychology was still without a concept of the unconscious and tended to be social rather than individual in emphasis, so that the general mind was unprepared for much of his subject matter. Indeed, despite the fact 'that by 1842 ... Wordsworth's English fame was secure', 'the vogue, the ear and applause of the great body of poetry-readers never quite thoroughly perhaps his, he gradually lost more and more, and Mr. Tennyson gained them'. (Matthew Arnold: 'Wordsworth' - 'Essays in Criticism'.)

But to return to our text. Following upon the passage which begins 'Dust as we are', comes the image of the peak

rising above the lake on which the poet rows in his 'elfin pinnace'.* This sight acts upon Wordsworth so forcibly that it passes directly into the stream of his sub-conscious life. The primitive directness of the vision is such that it stirs his entire being, affecting both thoughts and dreams:

> my brain
> Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
> Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
> There hung a darkness, call it solitude
> Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
> Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
> Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
> But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
> Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
> By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

It is this ability of Wordsworth to return to the instinctive outlook of the primitive, the life of the blood, stark and direct, as much as his communication of the significance and beauty of childhood, that makes for his greatness. He will listen beneath some rock to the sound of the wind speaking 'the ghostly language of the ancient earth'. His exaltation is 'shadowy' from its contact with the unknown. His relation to sun and moon is at times as direct as was that of the ancient Egyptian. Side by side with such passages of 'primitive

* Mr. Empson ('Seven Types of Ambiguity') sees in this type of experience a projection of a 'father totem'. Dr. Arthur Wormhouldt ('The Demon Lover') interprets the peak as the breast of Wordsworth's 'pre-oedipal mother' (sic!). For present purposes I shall treat it as a peak.

thinking and feeling', as Jung has called similar experiences, we have the passages of contemplation: the life of the instincts and the life of thought are implicity interlinked and vivify each other. Again one recalls the words of the Preface: 'our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings...'.

In the second book two completely contrasting descriptions are used to illustrate yet again the union of opposites within Wordsworth's great perspective of thought and feeling, beauty and fear, spontaneity and direction. Here the illustration is of the operation of 'the creative soul' through the maintenance of its 'plastic power', unsubdued 'by the regular action of the world'. Wordsworth's attitude to Nature does not imply only the passive drinking in of Nature's richnesses. Both active and passive modes are communicated dramatically by the close proximity of the horse-riding and the voyage on the lake. In the first account, the soul (the word is not fashionable, but it is Wordsworth's) is almost rebelliously active, as in the revelry and the loud uproar of the opening lines of this book; it is proud in the exultance of its own power, not an overweening power of the conscious ego, but a power that instinctively speaks its own independence and careless, animal freedom, reacting away from unison and calm; there is,

perhaps, even a touch of that 'lawlessness' upon which W. P. Ker commented:

> Our steeds remounted and the summons given,
> With whips and spurs we through the chauntry flew
> In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged Knight,
> And the stone-abbot and that single wren
> Which one day sang so sweetly in the nave
> Of the old church... Through the walls we flew
> And down the valley, and, a circuit made
> In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth,
> We scampered homewards.

Here we feel all the 'vulgar joy', the 'giddy bliss which, like a tempest, works along the blood', the active happiness when the 'blood (appears) to flow / For its own pleasure'. This is followed by the account of the expedition on the lake, when the soul returns into its passive mode, neither a negation nor a contradiction of the other, but a difference, another aspect of its plasticity:

> oh, then, the calm
> And dead still water lay upon my mind
> Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
> Never before so beautiful, sank down
> Into my heart, and held me like a dream:*

The in-drinking mode of experience is presented once more in the great passage on the relationship of mother and child.

* Professor Roy Morrell ('Wordsworth and Professor Babbit', 'Scrutiny', March, 1933) reminds us of the poet's self-confessed super-Berkeleyanism ('many times while going to school I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to reality') and comments on the lake passage we have quoted: 'His theory of spontaneity prevented Wordsworth from discovering that this state was subnormal in spite of its vague reminiscence of dream states'. There is, as far as I can see, no trace of sub-normality in the passage, unless (a) one exaggerates the metaphorical intention of 'sank down', or (b) labours the emphasis of '~~in~~ a dream'.

Wordsworth returns to the first stage of almost unconscious, certainly non-mental communion of the child. Its first 'dialogues' are 'mute'; they are, nevertheless, one of the deepest experiences of the unconscious self:

> Blest the infant Babe,
> (For with my best conjecture I would trace
> Our Beings' earthly progress,) blest the Babe,
> Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep
> Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul
> Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye!...

This first communion strengthens the soul in its receptivity. It is a passive awareness but its passivity differs in kind from that of the poet on Winander because it is, though no less intense, less conscious of the external <u>as</u> external. It takes place on the first plane of human life, before the mind has awakened and before objectivity exists. In turn, the second passivity is no less direct in its affect upon the paramount centres of the being than the first: it implicates the very roots of the poet's individuality and dynamically and creatively shapes his character. If it were the sole mode of his being, however, his character would be one-sided; thus we get, on the other hand, the vivid scenes of joyous, animal movement, the direction of freedom and sportiveness. And here there is a tough core of resistance to wrongful influences:

> A plastic power
> Abode in me, a forming hand, at times
> Rebellious, acting in a devious mood;
> A local spirit of his own, at war
> With general tendency, but for the most,
> Subservient strictly to external things
> With which it communed.

One may say, without any Frendian ambiguity, that Nature was there for the grown man as the mother had been for the baby, but if it provided the object of a blissful unison, it provided also an object to be acted upon:

> An auxiliar light
> Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
> Bestowed new splendour; the melodious birds,
> The fluttering breezes, fountains that run on
> Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed
> A like dominion, and the midnight storm
> Grew darker in the presence of my eye...

But the significant fact remains, that besides the powers of extraverted activity, Wordsworth has always retained the capacity of the child to draw Nature's riches unconsciously into itself:

> let this
> Be not forgotten, that I still retained
> My first creative sensibility.

The baby perceives nothing mentally and also nothing at second hand: it is open to the developing of the soul out of the unconscious which precedes mental awareness and always forms a substratum to it - it is open, that is, to a dynamism which the grown man is always in danger of thwarting by excess of 'that false secondary power',

> By which we multiply distinctions, then
> Deem that our puny boundaries are things
> That we perceive...

The true union of childhood and adulthood depends upon this ability of keeping ourselves 'open' in the manner of the child,

so that not only can we re-experience its freshness of vision, but also its primary sense of connection and balanced stability:

> No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:
> Along his infant veins are interfused
> The gravitation and the filial bond
> Of nature that connect him with the world.

The theme of the union of adult and childhood experience is explored, but in a somewhat different way in two pieces of Wordsworthian characterisation, the 'phantom of delight' and the Wanderer of 'The Excursion'. The 'phantom of delight' represents the Wordsworthian ideal of woman and the Wanderer of man. The first of these characters is described, to begin with, in terms of her physical attractions which combine the beauty of twilight (her hair and eyes) and that of dawn. She is 'an image gay' in whom darkness and light are united. In the second stanza the poet goes on to define her nature in greater depth. To say that 'the phantom' is 'the ideal', is probably to falsify what Wordsworth is saying - we have met with too many 'ideals' in art and in life to be very satisfied with the word. The second stanza, however, shows us the direction in which the poem is travelling and this is not the direction that might have been feared:

> I saw her upon nearer view,
> A Spirit, yet a Woman too!

We are told now of 'her household motions', of 'A creature not too bright or good / For human nature's daily food'. We feel that she exists: she is not mere poeticism, nor is she the

'modern' wife, that admirable social acquisition which speaks two languages fluently and can entertain so well. She means something in terms of basic human needs, in terms of love and comfort:

> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

The third stanza approaches the object by a further step: it shows 'the very pulse of the machine', the fine moral qualities which complete the picture of the woman. The poem is thus a gradual progression into depth, beginning with the evocation of a phantom, something for 'a moment's ornament'. She was simply this 'when first she gleamed upon (the poet's) sight', but the living qualities of her physical appearance lead to far deeper considerations of inner factors which have created this outward beauty:

> The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength and skill,
> A perfect Woman, nobly plann'd
> To warn, to comfort, and command.

The harmony is beautifully defined, the inner stability of 'firm' balanced against the plastic latency of 'temperate', which suggests a free play of spontaneity behind her moral virtues. In so much European art the will has been over-stressed: in Wordsworth's 'temperate' its true use is implied.

Again, in the Wanderer, a character already advanced in age, we find the stream of youthful freshness still active. Wordsworth describes his eye

> that, under brows
> Shaggy and grey had meanings which it brought
> From years of youth; which, like a Being made
> Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
> To blend with Knowledge of the years to come,
> Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

We are shown his life from childhood to old age, rooted in an innocence of eye and mind which has never been forfeited. He, too, has remained faithful to the spirit of piety, 'an habitual piety, maintained / With strictness scarcely known on English ground', and this spirit, fostered in childhood, has produced in manhood his capacity to be 'meek in gratitude' and to retain, in conjunction with pride of living and loftiness in appearance, a heart that was 'lowly'. In lines which convey as strongly as anything Wordsworth wrote, his own essential greatness, purity and innocence as a man, lines which ask to be read with that rare quality, innocence of mind, with which they were written, we see the harmonious blossoming of a soul in touch with the vivid continuum of Nature and with that first source of spontaneous activity. In this soul, as in the Wordsworth of 'The Prelude' beauty and terror become allies: both teach deep feeling, both develop an intensity of response, a many-sided fullness of being:

> So the foundations of his mind were laid.
> In such communion, not from terror free,
> While yet a child, and long before his time,
> Had he perceived the presence and the power
> Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
> Great objects on his mind with portraiture
> And colour so distinct that on his mind
> They lay like substances and almost seemed
> To haunt the bodily sense.

Within his character are fused thought and feeling, reason, intelligence, kindness, purity and humility. He images a possible human wholeness, the great strength of qualities from which a mean and a balance have emerged:

> His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
> And constant disposition of his thoughts
> To sympathy with man, he was alive
> To all that was enjoyed where'ere he went,
> And all that was endured; for, in himself
> Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
> He had no painful pressure from without
> That made him turn aside from wretchedness
> With coward fears. He could <u>afford</u> to suffer
> With those whom he saw suffer.

Let us, before concluding this section of our approach, turn to look at the so-called 'Lucy Poems'. How are we to account for their peculiar success? It occurs, again, I believe, through that unique union of the fresh, childlike vision with responsible, adult values. The vision contained in them stands in danger of dismissal by what is commonly assumed to be 'adult' - at school one was taught to laugh at Wordsworth's horse, but later, one has to learn to look at it anew and the effect of that sixth stanza is as startling and direct as it is 'primitive':

> My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
> He raised and never stopped:
> When down behind the cottage roof,
> At once, the bright moon dropp'd.

This dropping of the moon and the sudden fear that Lucy may be dead again couple together with a force that startles because it is so true to feeling and because, as material for

art, it is so unexpected. No one but a great poet could have made poetry out of such naked spontaneity. The poem, as Dr. Leavis puts it, 'is completely successful, yet we feel that its poise is an extremely delicate, almost precarious one, and our sense of its success is bound up with this feeling'. (Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry.) The psychological movement of the poem is controlled, one feels, by linking it with the movement of the moon, pointed, in its turn against that of the horse. Wordsworth thus illustrates, as Professor Harper has pointed out (William Wordsworth: Chapter XIV) one of the primary laws of our nature - to use the poet's own phrase, 'the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement'.

The adult intention of the poems, as in 'She was a Phantom of Delight', is embodied in the conception of Lucy herself. What other Romantic poet - certainly neither Keats nor Shelley - could have imagined a comparable picture of wholeness in womanhood? It is an artistic achievement, and one of the most difficult, to say anything about a woman that really matters, that has a real validity and that is not merely an airy male phantasy. Lucy represents a woman who has grown to completeness in close contact with a natural environment; she is endowed with 'impulse' which recognizes 'law' and 'restraint' and thereby enriches its own freshness. The element of discipline side by side with the element of sportiveness -

a discipline not violently imposed from without, but accepted as a stage of growth - is implied in Nature's decision: 'I will make / A lady of my own'. One has to approach the word 'lady' with a natural piety which is difficult to attain today when the word has been robbed of so much of its meaning. Lucy is what might be called 'a natural aristocrat' - she belongs to the only real aristocracy which exists and she is therefore a lady. Or rather, Nature has to 'make' a lady of her: she must go, that is to say, through a process of dynamic growth into individuality, and, in her rural solitude, she is made to feel, as Wordsworth himself felt,

> an overseeing power
> To kindle and restrain.

Thus, impulse and the natural law come from the same hidden spring - there is an organic flow of contained feeling as distinct from the will-to-feeling which perhaps all the Romantics with the exception of Wordsworth were guilty of mistaking for the real thing.*

For example, Mr. Santayana, in his essay on Shelley, has made out a case for the latter as a child of Nature, an

* Wordsworth responded with characteristic dour humour to this will-to-feeling as it manifested itself in the painting of Fuseli. In Haydon's journal for June 16th, 1842, we read: 'Wordsworth breakfasted early with me, and we had a good sitting ... I had told him Canova said of Fuseli, "Ve ne sono in gli arti due cose, il fuoco e la fiamma." "He forgot the third," said Wordsworth, "and that is il fumo, of which Fuseli had plenty."'.

innocent, a good man incapable of seeing why other men should not be good also, a man of complete spontaneity writing completely spontaneous poems in which the imagery is thrown up like the dazzling waters of a fountain. But Shelley is not a spontaneous writer: he is, at his worst, a writer who forces his feelings upward in jets. Place, say, 'The Cloud', beside the Lucy poems and one sees what is wrong with Shelley's 'spontaneity': it lacks an inner balance. It is 'kindled' but not 'restrained'. And it is kindled, only too frequently, not by Nature but by over-stimulated nerves. (Once the quality of restraint enters in, we get the beautifully controlled 'To Jane: The Invitation' and the sheer urbanity of parts of 'Julian and Maddalo'.)* The word 'restraint' was one for which the Romantics did not care and Blake condemned it wholeheartedly in his 'He who restrains desire does so because his is weak enough to be restrained'. Blake's remarks have their context, of course, and their stress is a salutary one. But there exists another kind of restraint: a wished not a willed restraint, a restraint exercised by the human psyche itself as it grows more and more delicately conscious of its relations with its surroundings and with its fellows. The individual

* 'Culture, that culture by which Wordsworth has reared from his own inward nature the richest harvest ever brought forth by a soil of so little depth, is precisely what was wanting in Shelley'. (J. S. Mill: Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties, 1859.)

psyche wants more than anything to be itself and in order to be itself it must contain itself. It does not want, basically, that is, to merge into other people's psyches (which, as Lawrence points out, seems to have been Poe's conception of 'love'), or (as with Whitman and Hart Crane after him) into material creation: it is only made to want these things by a misdirection of our will.

Lucy undergoes the restraint of Nature, the restraint that takes place because it is wished. This ideal condition of the organic sensibility might be commented on with Mill's remark about Wordsworth's poetry: 'The well is never so full that it overflows'. The discipline of Nature works by way of a twofold harmony: inner and outer, with oneself and with ones environment. Wordsworth achieves an interplay of the relation within the self and the relation without; of the twin growth of the vital and the moral faculties as interdependent parts of the soul which is creating itself; of spiritual with physical spiritual stature:

> 'Myself will to my darling be
> Both law and impulse: and with me
> The girl, in rock and plain,
> In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
> Shall feel an overseeing power
> To kindle and restrain.
>
> 'She shall be sportive as the fawn
> That wild with glee across the lawn
> Or up the mountain springs;
> And hers shall be the breathing balm,
> And hers the silence and the calm
> Of mute insensate things.

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

'And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell'.

The familiar lines comprise an account of the manner of human growth and of growing up, the reaching out of the spirit's antennae towards Nature, the strengths that pass inward from Nature in the perfected relation.

What value should we today place upon the aspect (and it is but one) of Wordsworth's genius which I have attempted to present in this chapter? That value is indicated extremely explicitly in the comment of Lionel Trilling in his admirable study, 'Wordsworth and the Iron Time': 'At every point in our culture we find the predilection which makes it impossible for most readers to accept Wordsworth. It is the predilection for the powerful, the fierce, the assertive, the personally heroic... We find it in our religion, or in our conception of religion - to most intellectuals the violence of Dostoïveski

represents the natural form of the religious life; and although some years ago Mr. Eliot reprobated Lawrence, in the name of religion, for his addiction to this characteristic violence, yet for Mr. Eliot the equally violent Bandelaire is a pre-eminently Christian poet...

'What Wordsworth knew - and said, for he had his comment to make on the literature of violence - is that life does not have to be justified and feeling affirmed by that which is violent, or by that which is proud: the merest flower is enough'.

Eschewing those philosophic and religious attitudes which dwell only upon that which is at high tension, Wordsworth chose 'the middle point, whereon to build / Sound expectations', and the Wanderer corrects the Solitary's despondency by pointing to his lack of a spiritual mean:

> full oft the innocent sufferer sees
> Too dearly; feels too vividly; and longs
> To realize the vision, with intense
> And over-constant yearning; there - there lies
> The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.

He is suspicious of the soul that 'takes its course / Along the line of limitless desires' and is clearly aware of the kind of spiritual perversions that assail it:

> There is a luxury in self-dispraise;
> And inward self-disparagement affords
> To meditative spleen a grateful feast.

The balanced ideal he proposes must arise from

> central peace, subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation.

It was a comparable feeling for balance that guided Wordsworth through his moral crisis after the events of the French Revolution:

> a mind, whose rest
> Is where it ought to be, in self-restraint,
> In circumspection - and simplicity,
> Falls rarely in entire discomfiture.
> (Prelude: Book Ten)

One looks back over the course of modern literature and its history appears, in many ways, saddeningly one-sided. One finds not 'central peace', but the continual swing between ennui and intoxication, between high-keyed passion and

> Je suis comme le roi d'un pays pluvieux
> Riche, mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très-vieux,
> Qui, de ses précepteurs, méprisant les courbettes,
> S'ennuie avec ses chiens comme avec d'autres bêtes.
> (Baudelaire: 'Spleen')

The passages that come most forcefully to mind are not built on 'a middle point', they coruscate:

> No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
> More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.
> Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
> Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?
> (Hopkins:
> Sonnet, No. 41 in 'Poems of G.M.H.')

J'ai avalé une fameuse gorgée de poison. - Trois fois béni soit le conseil qui m'est arrivé! - Les entrailles me brûlent. La violence du venin tord mes membres, me rend difforme, me terrasse. Je meurs de soif, j'étouffe, je ne puis crier. C'est l'enfer, l'éternelle peine! Voyez comme le feu

se relève! Je brûle comme il faut. Va, démon:
(Rimbaud: 'Une Saison en Enfer')

Or, at another extreme, where violence is being done to the self in the form of a deprecating wit, Laforgue seems to be centred on precisely nothing at all:

> Ah! moi, je demeure l'Ours Blanc!
> Je suis venu par ces banquises
> Plus pures que les communiantes en blanc...
> Moi, je ne vais pas à l'église,
> Moi je suis le Grand Chancelier de l'Analyse,
> Qu'on se le dise.
> (Derniers Vers)

* * * * *

(iii)

'Traditionary sympathies'

The pattern of individual wholeness affects and is affected by the pattern of society. Yeats makes the point as follows: 'Nor did I understand as yet [he is speaking of a phase of his own development] how little that Unity [of Being], however wisely sought, is possible without a Unity of Culture in class or people that is no longer possible at all'. Wordsworth's organic picture of individual human psychology, as I have attempted to trace it, meant inevitably that he must sooner or later abandon a belief in an overnight revolution and regeneration of mankind. It meant that his picture of society must become organic also, that his conception of history must therefore be broadened and those 'traditionary sympathies', of which the Wanderer speaks, deepened. Dr. E. C. Batho has shown, with a convincing display of evidence (The Later

Wordsworth?), that Wordsworth's political outlook came to be dominated by a desire to strengthen the organic links in society, as far as that was possible, to draw both upper and lower classes into interdependence and away from class warfare* and to limit the growing power of 'the mercantile interest'. His sense of the country as an organic unity, which must, at all costs, remain a unity, thus decided his attitude to 'the three great domestic questions', liberty of the press, parliamentary reform and Roman Catholic concessions. His warnings, as Dr. Batho points out, were timely, far-sighted - and ignored. Before the great democratic stampede was completely underway, we find Wordsworth's letters scattered with these level-headed insights into the conduct of social man: the hide-bound stupidity of the aristocracy, the ulterior motives of the manufactory interest in reform, the influence of 'unprincipled journalists', the need for improving the education of the upper classes, the dangers of over-centralisation in 'the practice of metropolitan organisation', the weaknesses of democratic rule - 'Whoever governs, it will be by outbidding for popular favour those who went before them'. If one did not know the context of these observations, one would probably assign

*'... the principal ties which kept the different classes of society in a vital and harmonious dependence upon each other have within these thirty years, either been greatly impaired or wholly 'dissolved'. (Letter to Daniel Stuart, 1817.)

them to that other great critic of nineteenth century democracy, De Toqueville.

I am not here principally concerned with the evolution of the poet's political views, but with the challenge to the organic sensibility which he met in his poetry. In the title of this chapter I have linked Nature, childhood and tradition. My reason for doing so is the belief which came to be Wordsworth's, that it was only by means of a living tradition that mankind retains the balance between its paramount and its imagined needs; between its natural piety, based in childhood, and 'The unshackled laymen's natural liberty'.

Wordsworth, beginning with his childhood contacts, was trying to preserve a form of integral consciousness which he found still existed among the Lakeland peasantry and which the growth of cities and of industry was gradually destroying throughout the country. It had remained intact within the forms of traditional life and local custom, the fine flower of culture* in its widest sense, and, in 'returning to nature', Wordsworth returned also to a pattern of life that had been built up through the centuries of English history with patience

* 'Culture is everywhere or it is nowhere: the whole people has it, or nobody has it... If culture is to flourish in the metropolis, it must flourish in every village. It will be slightly different in every region, as also in every social level; because it is something which grows'.

T. S. Eliot: Cultural Diversity and European Unity.

and quiet courage, and was so swiftly to be sacrificed in exchange for a network of railway lines and several million radio sets. Wordsworth's interest was not in noble savages, but in a rural community where traditions of religion and local culture had modified the primal relations with natural surroundings. His 'Nature' thus contained not only 'feeling', human emotions free from artificial perversions, but also 'reason', reflected in directing and disciplining aids which had been assimilated into the natural scheme without falsifying it.

But already the social pattern was threatened, and in 1798 Wordsworth could write: '... a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies'. (Advertisement to the Lyrical Ballads.) The development which Wordsworth foresaw is now complete and the consciousness he wished to preserve where he found it (hence the two sonnets against the project of a Kendal and Windermere Railway) has almost universally declined into a condition which

Mr. Bottrall, in his recent poem 'Natural Order', has characterised as 'urbanality'. Against the emotional torpor of urbanality, Wordsworthian 'simplicity' attempts to inculcate a capacity for 'tenderness' - that word which for both Wordsworth and for Lawrence was so important. (Lawrence, it will be recalled, contemplated 'Tenderness' as an alternate title for 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'.) Tenderness was one of the leading qualities of natural piety and, where natural piety is absent, 'I have no doubt,' says Wordsworth 'that, in some instances, feelings even of the ludicrous may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic.'

The tenacity of a local, living tradition in England was such, that in 1929, writing from his earliest experiences, D. H. Lawrence could record of his childhood that '... the life was a curious cross between industrialism and the old agricultural England of Shakespeare and Milton and Fielding and George Eliot'. And in 1915 Lawrence could look back to his boyhood of but twenty years before and describe, in one of the opening passages of 'The Rainbow', that mode of life and consciousness which in Wordsworth's day must still have generally been the norm:

'So the Brangwens came and went without fear of necessity, working hard because of the life that was in them, not for want

of the money. Neither were they thriftless. They were aware of the last halfpenny, and instinct made them not waste the peeling of their apple, for it would help to feed the cattle. But heaven and earth was teeming around them, and how should this cease? They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth. They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the daytime, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds' nests no longer worth hiding. Their life and inter-relations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow for the grain, and become smooth and supple after ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away. The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it...'* Sitting by the fire in the evenings, the men feel their blood '(flow) heavy with the accumulation from the living day'.

* The Wordsworthian feeling is, of course, sparer - farming was an austerer business in Cumberland than in the Midlands. The American, James Russell Lowell, in his essay of 1875, compares the spirit of Wordsworth's personages with that of the Puritan-descended New England peasantry.

In Chapter Ten, still more pertinent to the question of an operative religious tradition, there is the following passage:

'Gradually there gathered the feeling of expectation. Christmas was coming. In the shed, at nights, a secret candle was burning, a sound of veiled voices was heard. The boys were learning the old mystery play of St. George and Beelzebub. Twice a week, by lamplight, there was choir practice in the church, for the learning of old carols Brangwen wanted to hear. The girls went to these practices. Everywhere was a sense of mystery and rousedness. Everybody was preparing for something.

'The time came near, the girls were decorating the church, with cold fingers binding holly and fir and yew about the pillars, till a new spirit was in the church, the stone broke out into dark, rich leaf, the arches put forth their buds, and cold flowers rose to blossom in the dim, mystic atmosphere. Ursula must weave mistletoe over the door, and over the screen, and hang a silver dove from a sprig of yew, till dusk came down, and the church was like a grove.

'In the cow-shed the boys were blacking their faces for a dress-rehearsal; the turkey hung dead, with opened, speckled wings, in the dairy. The time was come to make pies, in readiness.

'The expectation grew more tense. The star was risen into the sky, the songs, the carols were ready to hail it. The

star was the sign in the sky. Earth too should give a sign. As evening drew on, hearts beat fast with anticipation, hands were full of ready gifts. There were the tremulously expectant words of the church service, the night was past and the morning was come, the gifts were given and received, joy and peace made a flapping of wings in each heart, there was a great burst of carols, the Peace of the World had dawned, strife had passed away, every hand was linked in hand, every heart was singing.

'... The cycle of creation still wheeled in the Church year. After Christmas, the ecstasy slowly sank and changed. Sunday followed Sunday, trailing a fine movement, a finely developed transition over the heart of the family...

'So the children lived the year of Christianity, the epic of the soul of mankind. Year by year the inner, unknown drama went on in them, their hearts were born and came to fulness, suffered on the cross, gave up the ghost, and rose again to unnumbered days, untired, having at least this rhythm of eternity in a ragged, inconsequential life'.

I have quoted at some length in order to emphasise the settled continuity, the rootedness of life where a central tradition obtains. It was his reverence for this which drove Wordsworth to complain of the loss of (apparently) so negligible a thing as the 'rude mass of native rock' which, in Book Two of 'The Prelude', has been removed from the village square and

in place of which 'a smart Assembly room' 'perks' and 'flares'. On its disappearance the poet recalls

> that old Dame
> From whom the stone was named, who there had sate,
> And watched her table with its huckster's wares
> Assiduous, through the length of sixty years.

She is a symbol, like Heine's Grossmutter - who in the 'Harzreise' sits immovably 'hinter dem Ofen' - of traditional life at one with its surroundings, and the removal of her stone means a step toward the chaotic England of Bolton, Manchester, Wigan. Wordsworth supplies an interesting note with the railway sonnets on the reality for the peasants themselves of continuity and earth-roots: 'The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. "Fell it!" exclaimed the yeoman, "I had rather fall on my knees and worship it." It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling'.

It was immeasurably to the advantage of our poet that, he alone among the Romantic writers, knew himself what it signified to be rooted in religious attachment to one

locale*, and to feel the counterbalance of this in a potentially harmful environment, as, for example, when he went up to Cambridge and 'imagination slept':

> ... let me dare speak
> A higher language, say that now I felt
> What independent solaces were mine,
> To mitigate the injurious sway of place
> Or circumstance...
> I looked for universal things; perused
> The common countenance of earth and sky.

* One thinks, in this context of that most Wordsworthian of Samuel Palmer's paintings 'Coming from Evening Church' (Tate Gallery) with its ordered relationship of men, sheep and nature, dominated by the full moon and the church steeple. Palmer was, in his youth, one of those deeply affected by Wordsworth's poetry which he read together with his friends, among them Calvert. In Shoreham, Kent, he had known the passing England which Wordsworth describes - 'all the village appurtenances - the wise-woman behind the age, still resorted to; the shoemaker always before it, such virtue is in the smell of leather; the rumbling mill, and haunted mansion in a shadowy paddock, where sceptics had seen more than they could account for; the vicarage with its learned traditions; and Wordsworth brought to memory every three hours, by

> ... the crazy old church clock
> And the bewilder'd chimes.

Byron would have stuffed his ears with cotton had he been forced to live there'.

(Samuel Palmer: Letter to P. G. Hamerton, August 4th, 1879.)

It is logical from Wordsworth's point of view that he should have introduced into 'The Prelude' the passage on Burke, spokesman of 'social ties / Endeared by Custom', although, as Professor de Selincourt notes, in view of Wordsworth's political outlook at the time of his first residence in London, he could not possibly have felt as he said he did towards Burke's oratory. The passage in Book Seven has also been considerably re-written in the 1850 version of the poem, but the re-writing does not tend toward political timidity: it serves rather to clarify Wordsworth's earliest sympathies with custom:

> (Burke) forwarns, denounces, launches forth
> Against all systems built on abstract rights,
> Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims
> Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time...*

In what sense Wordsworth does not admire 'custom' is qualified by a further passage from Book Fourteen, which, in its most interesting form in the 1850 version, reads:

> The tendency too potent in itself
> Of use and custom to bow down the soul
> Under a growing weight of vulgar sense,
> And substitute a universe of death,
> For that which moves with light and life informed,
> Actual, divine and true.

One recalls also those lines of the Immortality Ode when, speaking of the child, Wordsworth says:

* 'In his maturity and later life the sense of the nation as a unity, an organic whole, and the historical sense which prefers development and growth to violent change, owe something of their strength to Burke'. (E. C. Batho: The Later Wordsworth.)

> Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
> And custom lie upon thee with a weight
> Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

During his revolutionary phase the subject of his discourses with Beaupuis (Book Nine) had centred upon 'Custom and habit, novelty and change'.

The poet dwells with love on the forms taken by custom in its positive sense and realises with regret, that

> The times too sage, perhaps too proud, have dropped
> These lighter graces.

Already many of the traditional forms of country life were beginning to disappear and Wordsworth, in a passage entirely free from anything sentimental or romanticised but, in its context, deriving force from the realisation of what stands to be lost, could look back sorrowfully to the England of Spenser:

> I had heard (what he perhaps had seen)
> Of maids at sunrise bringing in from far
> Their May-bush and along the street in flocks
> Parading with a song of taunting rhymes,
> Aimed at the laggards slumbering within doors;

- and, what is even more significant:

> Had also heard, from those who yet remembered,
> Tales of the May-pole dance, and wreaths that decked
> Porch, doorway, or kirk-pillar; and of youths,
> Each with his maid, before the sun was up,
> By annual custom, issuing forth in troops
> To drink the waters of some sainted well,
> And hang it round with garlands. Love survives;
> But, for such purposes, flowers no longer grow...
> (Prelude: Book Eight.)

Imagination here takes on a communal form, and it is interesting to note that Wordsworth celebrates the poetic faculty as

extending throughout the social layers, from the 'trumpet tones' of 'Jewish song'

> Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made
> For cottagers and spinners at the wheel
> And sunburnt travellers resting their tired limbs
> Stretched under wayside hedgerows, ballad tunes...

And, on the other side of the balance from cultural dissolution, and also from the fact that the original edition of 'Lyrical Ballads' had such a cool reception, one recalls that on the simpler levels of society the peasantry still possessed a culture of its own.

The poet treasures 'simplicity', as we have said, not as a relief from adult awareness, into which he can drop back for easy refreshment, but as the necessary moral ground for the riches of traditionary sympathies. He tells us that

> the rural ways
> And manners which my childhood looked upon
> Were the unluxuriant produce of a life
> Intent on little but substantial needs.

and the force of that 'substantial' extends unmistakably into the moral sphere. It is characteristic of Wordsworth's genius that he can seize upon the telling detail - 'the naked table, snow-white deal / Cherry or maple' - and register it as one of the material concomitants of moral poise in a social culture.*

* Shelley, incidentally, was close enough to the feeling for the unambiguous and concrete realities of traditional sanctities to embody his conception of Freedom as follows:

> For the labourer thou art bread,
> And a comely table spread
> From his daily labours come
> In a neat and happy home.
> (Mask of Anarchy.)

It is in this way that he regards the survival of simple customs in 'these our unimaginative days' and laments their decay:

> Many precious rites
> And customs of our rural ancestry
> Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope,
> Will last forever.

The Wanderer is speaking of the funeral procession and the hymn sung by the mourners as they proceed on foot 'bearing the coffin in their midst ... / A sober company though few'. In the Eighth Book of 'The Excursion', the Wanderer turns once more to reflect upon the changes that he has seen in England and of the consequences of the new roads 'that penetrate the gloom / Of England's farthest glens', and the new cities 'Hiding the face of earth for leagues'. In the factory, although it is evening, the lights are never quenched and the night-shift takes over:

> Disgorged are now the ministers of day;
> And as they issue from the illumined pile
> A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door...

It is with this discussion that the poem, after the protracted graveyard scene, begins to come alive once more. Wordsworth feels what is involved with a terrible immediacy - an immediacy as present as when, some thirteen years before, he had sent a copy of the second edition of the 'Lyrical Ballads' to Charles James Fox, directing the latter's attention to 'The Brothers' and to 'Michael', and indicating the economic

context in which the poems were to be read: 'Recently', wrote Wordsworth, 'by the spreading of manufactures through every part of the country, by the heavy taxes upon postage, by workhouses, houses of industry, and the invention of soup shops etc., superadded to the increasing disproportion between the price of labour and that of the necessaries of life, the bonds of domestic feeling among the poor, as far as the influence of these things has extended, have been weakened and in innumerable instances, entirely destroyed'. The experienced politicion, significantly, failed to see any political meaning in the poems, said that blank verse seemed to him unsuited to humble subjects and that he particularly liked 'Harry Gill', 'We are Seven', 'The Mad Mother' and 'The Idiot'.

The narrator of 'The Excursion', joining his own testimony to that of the Wanderer, and granting the possibility that these 'new Arts' may one day prove beneficial, concurs about the nature of the immediate and irreparable loss:

> The old domestic morals of the land,
> Her simple manners, and the stable worth
> That dignified and cheered a low estate.
> Oh! where is now the character of peace,
> Sobriety, and order, and chaste love,
> And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
> And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer;
> That made the very thought of country-life
> A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
> Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd?*

* The solitary's retort about country beggars, tramps and the unintelligent ploughboy lends to the discussion a dramatic propriety, just as the Wanderer's 'Arts', in themselves beneficent and kind', gives the right balancing touch to his main argument.

The social loss is the family's and the individual's loss. Labour is drained off to the towns; the independent cottage industry gives place to the factory system and the common interest of the family unit disappears - 'the bonds of domestic feeling ... have been weakened':

> The Father, if perchance he still retain
> His old employments, goes to the field or wood
> No longer led or followed by his Sons...
> That birthright now is lost.
> Economists will tell you that the State
> Thrives by the forfeiture - unfeeling thought,
> And false as monstrous! Can the Mother thrive
> By the destruction of her innocent sons
> In whom a premature necessity
> Blocks out the forms of nature...

The changing social picture is conveyed movingly with all the controlled austerity of Wordsworth's verse. One finds nothing shrill or forced in the account, but a sober, psychological exactness, as it reaches its climax in the overthrow of the organic sensibility and in the description of, what we may perhaps label, the conveyor-belt mentality:

> this organic frame,
> Which from Heaven's bounty we receive, instinct
> With light, and gladsome motions, soon becomes
> Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
> And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
> Through the whole body, with a languid will
> Performs its functions...

The poet or the novelist of today can draw but little sustenance from any surviving body of traditional usages. In 'East Coker', for instance, custom appears as the vision of a

past age in a paraphrase from the work of a dead writer*:

> In that open field
> If you do not come too close, if you do not come
> too close,
> On a summer midnight, you can hear the music
> Of the weak pipe and the little drum
> And see them dancing around the bonfire
> The association of man and woman
> In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie -
> A dignified and commodious sacrament.
> Two and two, necessarye coniunction,
> Holding eche other by the hand or the arm
> Whiche betokeneth concorde.

Indeed, in their relation to traditional culture the urban Eliot has far more in common with Wordsworth than Wordsworth with, say, the rurally-domiciled George Herbert. For both Eliot and Wordsworth the link has been broken. The 'Lyrical Ballads' fight a rear-guard action in a hopeless battle. The following, from Dr. Leavis' 'The Common Pursuit', provides a succinct account of the situation: 'Wordsworth's kind of interest in rustic life...is essentially - in so far as it is more than nominal - an interest in something felt as external to the world to which he himself belongs, and very remote from it: the reaction that Wordsworth represents against the Augustan century doesn't mean any movement towards re-establishing the old organic relations between literary culture and the sources of vitality in general life. By Wordsworth's death, the Industrial Revolution had done its

* Sir Thomas Elyot's 'Book of the Governor', 1531.

work, and the traditional culture of the people was no longer there, except vestigially'. Which, after all, is the conclusion to what the Wanderer himself has to say: 'Where now', asks the poet, 'the winning grace / Of all the lighter ornaments attached / To time and season, as the year rolled round?' -

> 'Fled!' was the Wanderer's passionate response,
> 'Fled utterly! or only to be traced
> In a few fortunate retreats like this;
> Which I behold with trembling, when I think
> What lamentable change, a year - a month -
> May bring...

CHAPTER THREE.

THE CULT OF THE UNNATURAL.

a study of Baudelaire.

'Tout homme qui n'accepte pas les conditions de la vie vend son âme.' - Charles Baudelaire.

Before leaping the gap (as it may appear) to Baudelaire, a short summary of our findings in dealing with Wordsworth and Coleridge will provide us, I trust, with the justification. A young French poet of the third generation of Baudelairians, Pierre Jean Jouve, in the preface to his volume 'Sueur de Sang', writes :'.....l'homme moderne a découvert l'inconscient et sa structure..... et la face...du monde de l'homme en est définitivement changée.' We have already seen how, in Wordsworth and Coleridge, their ideas about the unconscious affect their ideas about Nature and about man's relations with the created world, and that in this they are writers representative of 'l'homme moderne'. Since the nineteenth century in England provides us with no great poet to continue the exploration, we must therefore cross the channel.

It is with some surprise that one finds M. Jouve in his 'Tombeau de Baudelaire' (contained in the critical work 'Défense et Illustration') ascribing to that poet what, properly speaking, belongs to Coleridge. 'Baudelaire', says M.Jouve, 'découvre alors l'inconscient poétique; il le nomme, il va lui donner voix.' M. Jouve is a Freudian and from this knowledge one may gather that his 'unconscious' is that which, in our study of Coleridge,

we defined as being beneath consciousness in the sense that it is forgotten or repressed, a condition against which the unconscious (under our second definition of 'inmost nature') must, given certain circumstances, struggle for fuller life. Thus 'l'inconscient poétique', deriving from definition one, may manifest itself in obsessional images (as frequently with Baudelaire himself), which tell of an inner disquiet, as in Coleridges'

> The morn is behind and at the full
> And yet she looks both small and dull.

Nature becomes a field of imagery which offers itself for an objectifying of our inner condition.

> La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
> Laissent parfois, sortir de confuses paroles;
> L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
> Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.
> (Correspondances.)

And here, by Nature, Baudelaire means something more general and less 'elemental', that the Romantics. His 'forêts de symboles' contain clocks, fetishes, cats, vampires, but very few trees. Paul Valéry's definition comes closest to Baudelaire's Nature in this context: 'La "nature" - c'est-à-dire la donnée. Et c'est tout. Tout ce qui est initial. Tout commencement, l'éternelle donnée de toute transaction mentale, quelles que soient donnée et transaction, c'est nature, - et rien d'autre ne l'est.' (Extraits du Cahier B 1910, Nouvelle Revue Française, December 1925.).

There is, of course, nothing necessarily 'neurotically repressed' in the method of image-making we have been describing.

A symbolical use of the moon, or a clock for that matter, need not necessarily involve inner disquiet: it is wholly a matter of degree and of context. The method described constitutes, after all, the basis of most poetic composition as Coleridge himself describes it. At one end of the scale a 'normal' sensibility perceives faces that are not there in a tree trunk or an old wall; at the other, John Ruskin in a state of delirium, sees the knob on one of his bedposts turn into 'a leering gibbering witch.' Uncontrolled, Coleridge saw fancy running to delirium, imagination to mania. Poetry may arise at any point between the two poles of 'normality' and delirium. But at both extremes it is provided with some indication of the relation between our consciousness and what lies beneath it. Coleridge, as we have said, was one of the first to formulate this idea in 'Anima Poetæ': 'In looking at objects of Nature, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking, for a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists...' Baudelaire develops this idea in 'La Nature est un temple' and, probably without any direct knowledge of Coleridge's prose, arrives in 'L'Art Philosophique' at the following very Coleridgean conclusion: 'Qu'est ce que l'art pur suivant la conception moderne? C'est créer une magie suggéstive contenant a la fois l'objet et le sujet, le monde extérieur à l'artiste et l'artiste lui-même.'

In my account of Coleridge and Wordsworth I have attempted to show that the relation between unconscious and conscious being brings into discussion three other topics: (a) the relation

between the innocent eye' and the adult eye - childhood and manhood, (b) the relation between man and society and (c), the relation between spontaneity and the will and, depending upon the interaction of these, the poets' valuation of the concept Nature. All three questions reoccur in Baudelaire and I shall approach them in the order given above. He explores them neither with Wordsworth's supreme mental health nor Coleridge's anxious interospection, but convulsively. First he shatters the mechanism of his sensibility, then carefully describes the ruin and how it was brought about.

Baudelaire cannot say with Wordsworth 'The child is father of the man' and arrive at the same positive wish that his days may be bound each to each. He has violently wrenched them apart. It seems, almost, that he has totally destroyed his own innocence, and we know that he certainly approached that condition.

> Dans ton île, ô Vénus, je n'ai trouvé debout
> Qu'un gibet symbolique où pendait mon image....
> - Ah! Seigneur! donnez-moi la force et le courage
> De contempler mon coeur et mon corps sans dégoût!
> (Voyage à Cythère.)

He stayed 'a child' only in so far, it would seem, as he always refused adult responsibility, longed for childhood security, piled guilt upon guilt on himself, then wrote to his mother to judge him It is rather pointless to explain his behaviour by saying that he had an Oedipus complex. There is no doubt that he had, and if he had not had one, he would certainly have invented something equally unpleasant. Childhood could seem to him 'le vert

paradis des amours enfantines, ' but

'L'innocent paradis, plein de plaisirs furtifs
Est-il déjà plus loin que l'Inde et que la Chine?
Peut-on le rappeler avec des cris plaintifs,
Et l'animer encore d'une voix argentine,
L'innocent paradis plein de plaisirs furtifs?'

Childhood is always threatened for him, dangerously near the brink. The child is about to be thrust out of the garden into the world outside with its remorse, crimes and sorrows. ('Moesta et Errabunda'), or about to be betrayed as , not altogether convincingly, in 'Bénédiction':

'Tous ceux qu'il veut aimer l'observent avec crainte...
Dans le pain et le vin destinés à sa bouche
Ils mêlent de la cendre avec d'impurs crachats;'

- which is a curious overstatement of the matter. The villain is the mother 'épouvantée et pleine de blasphèmes', replaced later on by the wife who repeats the first betrayal:

'J'arracherai ce coeur tout rouge de son sein,
Et, pour rassasier ma bête favorite,
Je le lui jetterai par terre avec dédain!'

In the great prose poem 'Vocations' from 'Spleen de Paris' four boys forecast their future lives. The first child will become an actor, the second a mystic. The third will fall into sensuality. The fourth, who is Baudelaire himself (or, at least 'j'eus un instant', says the poet, 'l'idée bizarre que je pouvais avoir un frère à moi-même inconnu.'), will be fated to a life of suffering. Indeed, it has already begun. He is bored. He is miserable at home. He has followed four strolling musicians and wished to join them in their wanderings, but he did not dare. And this contains the pattern of Baudelaire's

life; he is bound to childhood only by the feeling of unalterable sameness, the feeling that already the die was cast when, at the age of seven, he was torn from the 'innocent paradis' by his mother's remarriage. Ones impression of his tediously repetitive correspondence with her is that, having fixed upon this feeling with all the tenacity of an extraordinary will, he never seems to have wished to lose the absolute immediacy of his sense of his childhood 'betrayal'.

Baudelaire, as he tells us, always felt in his heart 'deux sentiments contradictoires: l'horreur de la vie et l'extase de la vie.' One might say that two such contradictions attached to his emotions about childhood. In his essay on Delacroix, he writes with some relish that the great painter considered 'l'enfance' 'incendiaire, et animalement dangereuse comme le singe,' an image of human development best forgotten and horrifying to the polished meticulous dandy Delacroix, who disliked the child with its fingers sticky 'de confitures (ce qui salit la toile et le papier), ou battant le tambour (ce qui trouble la méditation).' Baudelaire wrote the passage in all seriousness, only to move on with evident approval to Delacroix's rather pompous conclusion drawn from orthodox Catholic doctrine: 'Je me souviens fort bien - disait-il parfois, - que quand j'étais enfant, j'étais un monstre. La connaissance du devoir ne s'acquiert que très-lentement, et ce n'est que par la douleur, le châtiment et par l'exercise progressif de la raison, que l'homme, ~~dimine~~ *diminue* peu à peu sa méchanceté naturelle.

But in the essay on Constantin Guys, 'Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne', Baudelaire faces the other way about, and in this great work - great, not because of Baudelaire's valuation of Guys who was, after all, a mediocre artist, but because of its trenchant insights - one discovers the poet's most interesting remarks on the links between the child mind and the mind of the artist. In reading them, one also discovers something else - that, despite his abuse of his own sensibility, he has, at some unfathomable depth, remained innocent.

Baudelaire describes the artist here as the perpetual convalescent, his curiosity in the world about him forever freshly aroused, like that of someone returning to health after a long illness. Furthermore, this state of curiosity resembles the curiosity of the child: 'Or, la convalescence est comme un retour vers l'enfance.' The convalescent recovers a faculty for interest in small, apparently trivial things like that of the child and finds in them a growing enjoyment. Similarly, for the artist, 'l'homme-enfant', 'aucun aspect de la vie n'est émoussé; and thus 'le génie n'est que l'enfance retrouvée à volonté, l'enfance douée maintenant, pour s'exprimer, d'organes virils et de l'esprit analytique.'

The passage from which I have quoted explains, I think, why Baudelaire was such an excellent critic of his age. He seems to have been able to look upon an era where 'work' and 'progress' supplied the main driving force, with the terrifying clarity of a child of genius, as it were, a child fundamentally indifferent to the beliefs of a world where 'play' has become

suspect and where self-interest brings in the highest interest. This accounts for the infallible accuracy of his satiric aim:

'Le moins infâme de tous les commerçants, c'est celui qui dit: "Soyons vertueux pour gagner beaucoup plus d'argent que les sots qui sont vicieux."

'Pour le commerçant, l'honnêteté elle-même est une speculation de lucre.'

(Mon Coeur Mis à Nu.)

Again, in section nine of the essay on Guys, his conception of the dandy may contain a good many unfortunate strands of confusion, but one of the strands which stands out most clearly is that of childhood 'retrouvée à volonté', or rather the pattern of childhood taken up into adult life and re-expressed as an unshakable indifference to the ideals of commerce. The new aristocracy of the dandy - and the need for something of the kind remains a real one to this day - is, to be formed of 'quelques hommes déclassés, dégoûtés, désoeuvrés, mais tous riches de force native,' who will unite in the face of 'l'utilité' and 'la marée montante de la démocratie': 'tous participent du même caractère d'opposition et de revolte,' and their aristocracy will be all the more difficult to break since 'elle sera basée sur les facultés les plus précieuses, les plus indestructibles, et sur les dons célestes que le travail et l'argent ne peuvent conférer.'

* * *

One cannot blame the nineteenth century for Baudelaire. There seems no reason to suppose that a Renaissance Baudelaire would have been basically any healthier. And a Roman

Baudelaire (with a substantial income,) would probably have been a good deal more vicious. All one can say is, that as a being fundamentally prone to sickness, he suffers from, in an advanced degree, and expresses those sicknesses common to his age and aggravated by it, thus becoming one of the great representative figures of that age. In a century of increasing materialism and commercial expansion divorced, unlike the commerce of the Renaissance, from a religiously enriched art, the artist found himself artifically isolated from the main currents of life. Baudelaire belongs to that setting and he gives voice to the sense of isolation and futility arising from it. His comments are objectively perfectly valid and his ingrown consciousness real enough, but had he not been forcibly disabled in this way, we have no proof that he would not have deliberately sought to isolate and to turn in on himself by other means. One can affirm, perhaps, that in Baudelaire one has an example of human sensibility made inorganic (a) by his own inordinate desires and (b) by those means put at his disposal by the times he lived in. I say 'put at his disposal', because he did not like, say Lawrence, fight back against the disordering contact with the modern city - to use his own word, he 'cultivated' it.

With Baudelaire we recognise our surroundings at once. There are no antique survivals, no 'traditionary sympathies.' We have arrived. The immediacy of our contact with the world of Nature outside the great city is, almost daily, being diminished. We have lost the organic relations of the country town and of

the village. Montmartre with the vineyards on its hill is rapidly being surrounded by the streets below and Baudelaipe, after his voyage to Mauritius between May 1841 and Feb.1842, comes back to a Paris that in nine months has visibly extended in breadth and many of the old quarters of which have been demolished to make way for the Paris we know today - a process which was to continue throughout his lifetime. As he was to write in 1860 in one of his greatest poems,

Le vieux Paris n'est plus (la forme d'une ville
Change plus vite, hélas! que le coeur d'un mortel);

Je ne vois qu'en esprit tout ce camp de baraques,
Ces tas de chapiteaux ébauchés et de fûts,
Les herbes, les gros blocs verdis par l'eau des flaques,
Et, brillant aux carreaux, le bric-à-brac confus.
(Le Cygne.)

In this
Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,
Où le spectre, en plein jour, raccroche le passant,

we lack only the invention of the internal combustion engine and the electric train with the advent of which we should be in the urban world of Eliot and

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.....
Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter noon .....

where, we are meant to think of Baudelaipe and of Dante's Inferno simultaneously in an enriching unity:

si lunga tratta
di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto
che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta.
(see notes on the Waste Land, lines 60-64.)

Progress has lain for mankind, not - in Baudelaipe's words - 'dans la diminution des traces du péché originel; but 'dans le

gaz.....la vapeur.... les tables tournantes,' and Eliot's London is but a later and more final reflection of the 'bric-à-brac confus', the incessant change, the absence of a basic pattern, the ennui of Baudelaire's Paris:

> L'ennui, fruit de la morne incuriosité,
> Prend les proportions de l'immortalité. . .
>
> What shall I do now? What shall I do?
> . . . What shall we do tomorrow?
> What shall we ever do?

And, as Wordsworth had written, it will be remembered, more than a century before and at the beginning of the vast process of urbanisation:

> this organic frame,
> Which from Heaven's bounty we receive, instinct
> With light, and gladsome motions, soon becomes
> Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead . . .
> (Excursion, Book VIII.)

Baudelaire presents us with the embodiment of the completely urbanised spirit. He is and he loves only the urban. Unenclosed water, he confesses, he finds intolerable. He can only bear to contemplate it enclosed by the walls of some quay, in geometric order ('Souvenirs' - Schaunard; See Crépet's 'Charles Baudelaire', 1909). Woods, oaks, greenness, insects, the sun do not appeal to him: 'je suis incapable de m'attendrir sur les végétaux.' (Letter to F. Desnoyers, 1855). Verlaine characterises the poet exactly in 'Les Poètes Maudits': 'La profonde originalité de Charles Baudelaise, c'est à mon sens de représenter puissament et essentiallement l'homme moderne. . . Je m'entends ici que l'homme physique moderne tel que l'ont fait les raffinements d'une civilisation excessive, l'homme moderne, avec ses sens aiguisés et vibrants, son esprit douloureusement

subtil, son cerveau saturé de tabac, son sang brulé d'alcool, en un mot le bilio-nerveux par excellence comme disait M. Taine. Cette individualité de sensitive, pour ainsi parler, Charles Baudelaire, je le repète, la représente a l'état de type, de héros, si vous voulez bien.' A hero, but an urban hero. And Baudelaire does not seem to have wished to be, or to have been capable of being anything else. That was his peculiar strength and also his peculiar weakness. He was not concerned with imagining the possibility of a different state of things. Lost at the heart of a great metropolis, he preferred to stay lost. He attracted suffering to himself, as Mr. Eliot says. Happiness seemed a vulgarity to him: 'Faut-il qu'un homme soit tombé bas pour se croire heureux.' (Projets de la Lettre à Jules Janin.) He did not want liberty or courageous humour or a renewal of those organic links in himself which his contact with 'les raffinements d'une civilisation excessive', in Verlaine's phrase, more and more decayed. He needed the city, the refinements, the 'nerves':

> Je voulais m'enivrer de l'énorme catin
> Dont le charme infernal me rajeunit sans cesse.
>
> Que tu dormes encor dans les draps du matin,
> Lourde, obscure, enrhumée, ou que tu te pavanes
> Dans les voiles du soir passementés d'or fin,
>
> Je t'aime, ô capitale infâme! . . .
> (Epilogue: Spleen de Paris.)

He needed the eternal ambiguity of 'le mensonge' in order to continue the titilation of himself which ended (how contradictorily for 'l'homme enfant'!) so banally with that fallacious and familiar belief of urban man in the efficacity of 'work' to vanquish

boredom and to set the personality in order. 'A few crabbed imperatives served as basis for his whole moral life,' as M. Sartre has said. This is particularly true of the final phrase: . . .Qu'il est grandement temps . . . de faire ma perpetuelle volupté de mon tourment ordinaire, c'est-à-dire du Travail!' (LXXXVII, Mon Coeur Mis à Nu.) 'Le plaisir nous use. Le travail nous fortifie. Choisissons. (LXXXIX, Ibid.) 'Pour guérir de tout, de la misère, de la maladie et de la mélancolie, il ne manque absolument que le Goût du travail.' (XC, Ibid.) And in the last entry which he made in his intimate journal, promising himself the suppression of all stimulants, the hope that he will undergo a regeneration and that his mother will live long enough to enjoy his transformation, 'travailler toute la journée, ou du moins tant que mes forces me le permetront.'

Baudelaire, then, begins in division, as the perverse adolescent of eighteen writing the poem on the 'beautiful ugliness' of the Jewess, Louchette. In 1847, at the age of twenty six, he writes 'La Fanfarlo, a short story, the importance of which André Gidé was one of the first to remark in his 'Journals', and in which almost all the later Baudelairian traits are present. Here, Baudelaire sketches, in Samuel Cramer, the young decadent poet, a semi-ironical but perfectly accurate picture of himself as he was then and as he was to continue in a state of fixity for the next twenty years:

'C'est à la fois un grand fainénant, un ambitieux triste et un illustre malheureux. . . Comment vous mettre au fait, et vous faire voir bien clair dans cette nature ténébreux, bariolée

de vifs éclairs, - paresseuse et entreprenante à la fois, - féconde en desseins difficiles et en risibles avortements; - esprit chez qui le paradoxe prenait souvent les proportions de la naivete, et dont l'imagination était aussi vaste que la solitude et la paresse absolues ... Il jouait pour lui-même et à huis clos d'incomparables tragédies, ou, pour mieux dire, tragi-comédies. Se sentait-il effleuré et chatouillé par la gaieté, il fallait se le bien constater et notre homme s'exercait à rire aux éclats. Une larme lui germait-elle dans le coin de l'oeil à quelque souvenir, il allait à sa glace se regarder pleurer.'

Thirteen years later, Baudelaire is still refining upon the same type and gives us the following picture in 'Paradis Artificiels':

'Pour idealiser mon sujet je dois en concentrer tous les rayons dans un cercle unique, je dois les polariser; et le cercle tragique ou je les vois rassembler sera, comme je l'ai dit, une âme de mon choix, quelque chose d'analogue à ce que le XVIII^e siècle appelait l'homme sensible, ce que l'école romantique nommait l'homme incompris, et ce que les familles et la masse bourgeoise flétrissent généralement de l'epithete d'original.

'Un temperament moitié nerveux, moitié bilieux, tel est le plus favorable aux évolutions d'une pareille ivresse; ajoutons un esprit cultivé, exercé aux etudes de la forme et de la couleur; un coeur tendre, fatigué par le malheur, mais encore prêt au rajeunissement; nous irons, si vous le voulez bien, jusqu'à admettre des fautes anciennes, et ce qui doit en resulter dans une nature facilement excitable, sinon de remords positifs, au moins

(le regret

le regret du temps profané et mal rempli. Le goût de la metaphysique, la connaissance des différentes hypothèses de la philosophie sur la destinée humaine, ne sont certainement pas des compliments inutiles, - non plus que cet amour de la vertu, de la vertu abstraite, stoïcenne ou mystique, qui est posé dans tous les livres dont l'enfance moderne fait sa nourriture, comme le plus haut sommet où une âme distinguée puisse monter. Si l'on ajoute à tout cela une grande finesse de sens . . . je crois que j'ai rassemblé les éléments généraux les plus communs de l'homme sensible moderne, de ceque l'on pourrait appeler la forme banale de l'originalité.'

Again the picture is not without irony perhaps, and again one sees in it Baudelaire himself, the lover of exquisite refinements and artificiality. From both Samuel Cramer and this sketch of the opium eater one derives the same impression, that neither of them possesses an emotional life that is rich in itself. Philosophical ideas float in these minds prone to excitation but they, also, are stimulants rather than beliefs. The expensive feelings experienced by 'un temperament moitié neurveux, moitié bilieux' are simply fixed in the mirror beforehand, fabrications imposed upon the human psyche and not part of the stream of its passional life. This divided temperament tries to build its foundations on an almost entirely 'mental' existence and so used is it to working emotions from the head downwards that, where the instincts should be, a sort of rigor mortis has set in. Thus Baudelaire the voluptuary becomes Baudelaire the crabbed moralist

pledging himself 'aux principes de la plus stricte sobriété,' - in Nietzsche's telling phrase 'clear, cold, cautious, conscious, without instincts, opposed to instincts'. In 1860 when Baudelaire published 'Les Paradis Artificiels', worked up-one of his habitual methods of composition - from something he had been engaged upon ten years before, he had reached his thirty ninth year, and his instincts had remained in the same disintegrated condition in which they had been when he was eighteen.

These facts are of the greatest significance when we examine, in further detail, Baudelaire's attitude to the word 'Nature'. His moral system is that of Catholicism and Catholicism of the narrowest variety. For Thomas Aquinas there existed a 'natural law' and this was incorporated into the religious life and made complete by grace: 'God . . . both instructs us by means of His law and assists us by His grace, wherefore, in the first place, we must speak of law; in the second grace,' which he proceeds to do. (The Essence of Law: Summa Theologica.) Further he goes on to quote with approval a gloss on Romans II 14: '. . . when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the Law, the gloss says: Although they have no written law, yet they have the natural law, whereby each one knows, and is conscious of, what is good, and what is evil.'

In poetry, the best expression of the organic relation between Nature and Grace which stands at the heart of Thomist philosophy, belongs not to a Roman Catholic but to an Anglican

George Herbert. To quote it at this point will provide us with a perspective upon the famous Nature passage from Baudelaire's essay on Guys and a marked, not to say dramatic contrast when one considers the two points of view as deriving from a common religion. Herbert's poem 'Grace' shows by implication the relation between Grace and Nature almost entirely in the imagery of Nature:

> My stock lies dead, and no increase
> Doth my dull husbandrie improve:
> O let thy graces without cease
> Drop from above!

The invocation to Grace reveals it as the clue to enlivening Nature. It makes one 'alive' by 'crossing' the action of 'Death and Sinne'. When'Sinne' hammers the heart hard Grace 'suppl..es' it. In the third stanza it is paralled by dew falling upon grass - the divine vitalising element falling upon flesh ('All flesh is grass') being suggested by the concealed Biblical echo:

> The dew doth ev'ry morning fall;
> And shall the dew out-strip thy dove?
> The dew, for which grasse cannot call,
> Drop from above.

Now the subtle relation between Nature and Grace seen here is impossible for a writer like Baudelaire who attempts, in so far as he is religious at all, to abolish the natural pattern and substitute for it, as we shall observe later, the pattern of the will. The aim of the good life, as he conceives it, is not, as Christianity teaches, to restore to natural perfection those instincts which the original sin of Adam impaired, but to find a substitute for them. To his case one might apply that very

Christian dictum of Nietzsche's - though Nietzche would have perhaps resented the comparison with Christianity -; 'Every mistake is in every sense the sequel to a degeneration of the instincts, the disintegration of the will. This is almost the definition of evil.'

Baudelaire accepts from Catholicism the idea of man's natural depravity and pursues it as far as that same Manichean heresy which, for a time, fascinated Blake:

> Qu'est ce que la chute?
> Si c'est l'unité, devenue dualité c'est Dien qui a chuté.
> En d'autres termes, la création ne serait-elle pas la chute de Dieu?
> (XXXIII Mon Coeur Mis à Nu.')

How deeply and for how long he believed this we do not know. The factors in his mistrust of created Nature are partly psychological, partly historical. The historical ones are the least tennous to trace.

'Baudelaire' as M.Jouve writes, 'est au carrefour du romantisme. . . et du mouvement parnassien.' He thus finds himself involved in the reaction against Romanticism, a reaction which is a confused enough and self-divided affair. One can deal with its main features under four headings:

(1) The reaction manifests itself as the enemy of the opulent flabbiness of much Romantic writing which is identified with the opulence of Nature's own creation. Therefore the Parnassian rejects also the Romantic cult of Nature and replaces it with the cult of Art. In this respect the reaction connects

with the idea of concise, well-trimmed writing as opposed to baths of warm feeling. Baudelaire can now write on the nature of poetic composition that '...par une série d'efforts determinée l'artiste peut s'élever à une originalité proportionelle.' Two of the words we meet with most often in his verse are 'froid' and 'stérile', a vocabulary derived in part from Gautier ('Symphonie en Blanc Majeur') before him and transmitted to Mallarmé ('Hérodiade') after him. Art now tries to embody in both its form and content that which is antithetical to Nature:

De ces femmes il en est une,
Qui chez nous descend quelquefois,
Blanche comme le clair de lune
Sur les glaciers dans les cieux froids . . .

Sphinx enterré par l'avalanche,
Gardien des glacier étoilés,
Et qui, sous la poitrine blanche,
Cache de blancs secrets gelés . . .
(Symphonie en Blanc Majeur.)

Ses yeux polis sont faits de minéraux charmants,
Et dans cette nature étrange et symbolique
Où l'ange inviolé se mêle au sphinx antique,

Où tout n'est qu'or, acier, lumière et diamants,
Resplendit a jamais, comme un astre inutile,
La froide majesté de la femme stérile.
(XXVII. Fleurs du Mal.)

Je veux que mes cheveux qui ne sont pas de fleurs
A répandre l'oubli des humaines douleurs,
Mais de l'or, à jamais vierge des aromates,
Dans leurs éclairs cruels et dans leurs paleurs mortes,
Observent la froideur stérile du metal . . .
(Hérodiade.)

As part of this reaction against 'Nature','inspiration', 'imstinct', Baudelaire translates Poes 'Philosophy of Composition' ('La Genèse d'un Poème') which comprises a detached account of how Poe consciously and coldly set to work on writing 'The Raven.'

(2) The reaction takes place on a perfectly 'Romantic' basis, i.e., though strong feeling is suspect, the Romantic agony of divided sensibility is still perpetuated. Though 'form' becomes important, content remains emotionally bad. Gautier continues to explore this agony of consciousness in neat, sculpted little poems on such subjects as cruel odalisks ('La Poème de la Femme'), fetishes ('A une Robe Rose'), hermaphrodites ('Contralto') and in 'Lacenaire' describes his reactions to the severed and pickled hands of a murderer:

> Curiosité dépravée,
> J'ai touché, malgré mes dégoûts,
> Du supplice encore mal lavée
> Cette chair froide an duvet roux.

Baudelaire similarly writes neat sonnets on his light loves and his ambivalent attitudes to them. It was not for nothing that Baudelaire dedicated 'Fleurs du Mal' to Gautier, 'au poète impeccable . . . maître et ami,' for the latter had supplied him, in his poetry, with forms for the expression of his own anti-natural bent; and in that adolescent novel 'Mademoiselle de Maupin' (which Baudelaire recommended to Delacroix and of which Delacroix wrote back 'J'en ai été ravi.') our poet found more fuel for the fire which, as he tells us, burnt him but made him cold.

(3) Perversity is encouraged, because of the necessity to 'épater le bourgeois', whom Baudelaire identifies with 'le naturel' (Mon Coeur Mis à Nu?). As with certain of the Romantics, to be anti-bourgeois also means enjoying the aura of promiscuity and flaunting this in the face of the bourgeoisie

by writing poems about it. A fundamental split of feeling thus continues sanctified by form and 'le Beau' as opposed, rather insistently to 'le Bien.' Mr. Eliot has commented: 'One may hazard the conjecture that the care for perfection of form, among some of the romantic poets of the nineteenth century, was an effort to support, or to conceal from view, an inner disorder.'

(4) There exist, in addition to aesthetic rationalisations for disliking Nature and all the word implied, those political ideals which, as M. Sartre stresses in his study of Baudelaise, were at the time very much in the air: the idea of an 'anti-nature', in Comte's phrase and, in the terminology of Marx and Engels, an 'anti-physis', to be introduced at this phase of man's evolution by the political action of man himself.

Now we may turn to the personal and psychological aspect of Baudelaire's rejection of 'la nature'. The factors which we have enumerated above are sufficient to arouse our suspicion on reading Baudelaire's assault upon Nature in the name of cosmetics and 'la parure' in the essay on Guys. It is all far too violent to be true, like similar passages in de Sade, a camouflage for something else. The passage begins as an attack on the eighteenth century simplification of Nature, but instead of proceeding to a restatement, such as Wordsworth's, he prefers the melodrama of an absolute antithesis:

'La plupart des erreurs relatives au beau naissent de la fausse conception du dixhuitième siècle relative à la morale. La nature fut prise dans ce temps-là comme base, source et type de tout bien et de tout beau possibles. La négation du péché

originel ne fut pas pour peu de chose dans l'aveuglement général de cette époque. Si toutefois nous consentons a en référer simplement au fait ... nous verrons que la nature enseigne rien, ou presque rien, c'est-à-dire qu'elle contraint l'homme à dormir, à boire, à manger, et à se garantir tant bien que mal, contra les hostilités de l'atmosphère. C'est elle aussi qui pousse l'homme à tuer son sembable ... Tout ce qui est beau et noble est le résultat de la raison et du calcul. Le crime, dont l'animal humain a puisé le goût dans le ventre de sa mère, est originellement naturel. La vertu, au contraire est artificielle, surnaturelle ... Le mal se fait sans effort, naturellement, par fatalité; le bien est toujours le produit d'un art.'

The best comment on this passage belongs to M. Sartre. It is concise, lucid and damning. It permits a transition from the historical to the psychological rationalisation:

'... Ce texte qui paraît décisif à la première lecture, est moins convainquant lorsqu'on le relit. Baudelaire y assimile le Mal et la Nature. Et ces lignes pourraient être signées du marquis de Sade.* Mais pour y ajouter tout à fait foi, il

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* Dr. Praz has in fact paralleled them with passages from de Sade's 'Justine' and 'Juliette':

'La nature ... marche d'un pas rapide à son but, en prouvant chaque jour ... qu'elle ne crée que pour détruire et que la destruction ... lui plait bien plus que la propagation.'
('Justine' Vol. I.)

'Je me dis: il existe un Dieu, une main a créé ce que je vois, mais pour le mal ...'
('Juliette' Vol.II)

Again, in 'Juliette' Vol. II, men are described as having merely 'égarés dans les sentiers de la vertue.'
('The Romantic Agony', ChapterIII).

faudrait avoir oublié que le vrai Mal baudelairien, le Mal satanique qu'il a cent fois évoqué dans ses oeuvres, est produit délibéré de la volonté et de l'artifice.'

In this final sentence M. Sartre puts his finger directly upon the weak spot of the passage - its bad faith. Baudelaire's sinfulness is entirely a question of the mind against the instincts. Thus the 'inconscient poétique' he explores, although - if we follow the hint of this passage on Nature - apparently the source of evil obsessions, is in fact the receptacle for obsessions placed there by the conscious mind itself. It is not instinct that is at fault, but the conscious mind that would use instinct for its own ends. And what these ends are we shall presently see. One of the pieces of popular jargon we hear today, talks of dark desires springing from the id, or the unconscious. A very necessary distinction to make is one between that which is primarily unconscious and that which is made unconscious. It is the second which 'springs' in Baudelaire. His abnormally active mind forces upon his instinctive being an enormous content of titilating wishes of possibilities for guilty pleasures. Baudelaire's 'unconscious', seething with endless variations on the theme of pleasure-pain, pain-pleasure, with fetish-ridden and untiring exacerbations, is less an unconscious than the over-crowded dream of an opium eater. For like the opium eater's dream its contents are induced by a stimulant - the stimulant of detached mental consciousness. Its feverish activity in the procreation of unholy delights resembles nothing so much as the agitation of the dreaming addict such as

De Quincey describes him. (See 'The Pains of Opium', Part III of 'The Confessions of an Opium Eater.') A mental specialist, Doctor Devine, has interestingly remarked in 'Recent Advances in Psychiatry: 'The schizophrensic does not suffer from a loss of something, he suffers from a surfeit, psychologically his consciousness is fuller than normal consciousness and the reality which it embraces is more thickly populated than that comprehended by the normal mind.'

Baudelaire's questionable positive to the negative which he expresses in the word Nature is to be found in his conception of the dandy. Nature represents instinct, the dandy represents the triumph of self-consciousness over instinct: 'Le Dandy doit aspirer à être sublime, sans interruption. Il doit vivre et dormir devant un mirroir.' - which is even more excessive than the case of Samuel Cramer who only went so far as to rehearse his laughter and to watch himself cry. To be the dandy absolute one would have to forgo being the poet, for the dandy, we are informed, 'aspire à l'insensibilité.' To hold oneself in, to keep down ones feelings, to appear irreproachably turned out 'à toute heure du jour et de la nuit' is to submit to 'une gymnastique propre à fortifier la volonté et à discipliner l'âme.' This, we see, was what Delacroix implied, when, as Baudelaire reported, he said: '(c'est)...par l'exercise progressif de la raison, que l'homme diminue peu à peu sa méchanceté naturelle.' Indeed, so all-embracing is the formula of dandyism, that even the least movement of Nature is to be stilled into insensibility: 'La femme est le contraire du Dandy.' Why? 'La femme a faim, et elle veut manger;

soif, et elle veut boire.' In short, 'La femme est naturelle, c'est - à - dire abominable.'!

As a complementary section to our discussion of the nature of spontaneity in Chapter Two, we may now proceed to examine in greater detail the nature of willed consciousness such as Baudelaise conceives it. It is first and foremost a substitute. Indeed, in this strange and tormented life, everything becomes a substitute for something else and to compensate for the loss of the natural, we find also an artificial substitute for Nature. In a broadcast talk, 'Baudelaire and his Mother,' R.H. Ward gives a hint of this when he says, '. . . Nature - Mother Nature - seldom fails to take her revenge; perhaps it was because he loved his mother as well as hated her that he felt so much enthusiasm for the work of certain artists - Poe, Delacroix, Wagner - who show highly feminine characteristics, an over-ripeness of feeling, an emotional indiscipline? Mr. Ward's remarks contain a most useful hint, though one would feel inclined to question his unqualified transition from the idea of 'highly feminine' (also unqualified) to 'emotional indiscipline'. Another, and, I think, more verifiable way of putting the matter, would be to say that while Baudelaire the dandy was cold, withheld, a willed being, Baudelaire the voluptuary permitted himself a substitute for the warm unison of love and the absence of anguish which that unison makes possible, by using music and painting for his own purposes. The substitute was, as we shall see, a very confected affair, and even here the intoxication

which he experiences does not bring about any darkening of his famous 'lucidité', that incessant mental activity of awareness. He must still watch himself. He must always retain sufficient hold upon himself to be able to work upon his nerves, to feel the exhilaration taking its effect.

Baudelaire's own account of his reactions to the Prelude to Act One of 'Lohengrin' gives us the clearest impression of what it was, as the prototype of 'un temperament moitié nerveux, moitié bilieux,' he sought and found in the new music. But first let us consult another great representative figure of the nineteenth century: 'Who, in sooth,' asks Nietzsche in 'Ecce Homo', 'was the first intelligent follower of Wagner? Charles Baudelaire, the very man who first understood Delacroix* - that typical decadent in who a whole generation of artists saw their reflection.' Nietzsche's commentary on Baudelaire's taste is, as I hope to show, perfectly to the point. This is not, of course, the place to make an assessment of Wagner and in quoting Nietzsche on his music and placing beside Nietzsche's account that of Baudelaire, I am merely attempting an illustrative comparison of two kinds of taste and two totally different sensibilities. It does,however, seem to me that Nietzsche is substantially right here - at least in isolating that dangerous

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* 'Baudelaire', said Delacroix, 'dit dans sa préface (Préface aux Histories Extraordinaires de Poe) que je rapelle en peinture ce sentiment d'idéal, si singulier et si plaisant dans le terrible.' Il a raison.'

kind of appeal certain aspects of Wagner's music can make, and that there is a strong element of perversity in Baudelaire's enthusiasm.

Wagner, like Delacroix in painting, says Nietzsche, is one of 'the fanatics of expression,' 'he says a thing again and again until one despairs - until one believes it.' And it was this high-pitched insistence which appealed to Baudelaire on his own evidence. Let us bear in mind Baudelaire's statement:

'Je n'ai le désir ni de démontrer, ni d'étonner, ni d'amuser, ni de persuader. J'ai mes nerfs, mes vapeurs. J'aspire à un repos absolu et à une nuite continue ... Je n'ai soif que d'une liqueur inconnue sur la terre ... d'une liqueur qui ne contiendrait ni la vitalité, ni la mort, ni l'excitation, ni le nêant ... Dormir, et encore dormir, tel est aujourd'hui mon unique voeu.' *

Then let us place beside it Nietzsche's diagnosis of the decadent condition: 'impoverished life, desire for the end, great lassitude' and his accusation of Wagner in the first of the series of essays 'The case of Wagner':

'Wagner increases exhaustion, it is on <u>that account</u> that he allures the weak and exhausted ... Wagner's art is morbid. The problems which he brings upon the stage - nothing but the problems of hysterics - the convulsiveness of his emotion, his over-excited sensibility, his taste, which always asked for stronger stimulants . . . He has divined in music the expedient for exciting fatigued nerves -- he has thus made music morbid.'

(Thus

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* 'Projets de Preface pour les Fleurs du Mal' (1863-65)

Thus it is that Baudelaire grows enthusiastic over the Prelude to Act one of 'Lohengrin.' He quotes first the programme's account of the piece italicising those passages of dramatic suggestiveness which the new music was particularly suited to convey, all passages indicating lushness, heightened and flowing sensation, the merging of personality into infinite spaces: 'plonge dans les espaces infini ... la troupe miraculeuses des anges . . . il (le coeur) cède à une béatitude croissante . . . la lumineuse apparition . . . il(le coeur) s'abîme dans une adoration extatique, comme si le monde entier eût soudainement disparu. . .' ('Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser.')

One has at one and the same time an exaggerated substitute for that Nature the dandy rejects, and also a kind of 'spirituality.' In fact the spirituality makes Nature acceptable. The conscious mind, has worked upon it, freed it from 'vulgarity.' Just as Baudelaire transmutes his specifically sexual emotion into fetishes, into veils, jewels, stuffs, so his capacity for tender feeling of all kinds must undergo a similar refinement.

Beside this substitute nature-spirit concoction and closely related to it, one has that further decadent anomaly of the will cast down, yet, at the same time, clenched upon the feeling which the addict desires for perpetuation. In the introduction to 'Fleurs du Mal', Baudelaire says of Satan's hold over mankind:

le riche métal de notre volonté
Est tout vaporisé par ce savant chimiste.

and Nietzsche says of Wagner that he was 'a typical decadent, in whom all 'free will' was lacking, all of whose characteristics were determined by necessity.' Yet in the fevered search for further sensation, while in this pathological condition, one remarks also the curious phenomenon of the will to stay like this, to push oneself along as well as to allow oneself to be carried off by the current, to consciously reduce ones natural equilibrium.

Baudelaire proceeds, after his first note on the Prelude, with a fuller account from the Abbé Liszts' 'Lohengrin and Tannhäuser' italicising as in the first extract: 'la beauté ineffable du sanctuaire..... amour et foi...' and continuing through an enumeration of light, mist and colour linked with tenuous sensations such as was to become the stock-in-trade of symbolist verse: 'avec un éclat éblouissant de coloris.... le vif étincellement.... lueur céleste.... transparente vapeur... plus étherées encore... idéale mysticité ...' The insistence upon blinding light seems symptomatic of this brand of conscious emotional titillation: the light must become more dazzling, more intense until at last, 'nos regards aveuglés,' it blazes 'dans toute sa magnificence lumineuse et radiante' and we feel ourselves delivered from ourselves. Later, of course, our nerves will feel the irritation and we shall need more stimulants, but for the moment, we are tasting the one ineffable bliss. 'Je me sentis', says Baudelaire 'délivré' <u>des liens de la pesanteur</u> (the italics are his) et je retrouvai par le souvenir l'extraordinaire <u>volupté</u> qui circule dans les lieux hauts.' -

where, if 'le souvenir' means anything, the Platonic doctrine of the origin of the soul has been called in for further emphasis. One recalls in contrast the witty statements of the dandy - that love is an exit from oneself and that the true artist never goes out from himself, that love is a game and one of its terrors that a player may lose the government of himself. For this musical evaporation of the self is the other side of the picture, the other aspect of consciously handling ones deepest feelings and making them subservient to the action of the will. With the sensibility which has become completely inorganic there remain two possibilities for action: a forced asceticism or a forced indulgence. Both can be 'spiritualised', as we have noted. It depends, presumably, upon ones immediate mood what form of spirituality one elects to experience. Both are in their essence what Lawrence aptly sums up in his essay on Walt Whitman as 'post mortem effects', and he who continually seeks them must tend in Lawrence's other striking phrase towards the condition of 'a corpse with an abnormally active mind.' The cold dandy and the feverish roué live beneath the skin of the same corpse. Again it was Nietzsche who proposed the final answer to this schism of the Romantic agony: 'Chastity and sensuality are not necessarily antithetical; every true marriage, every genuine love-affair is beyond any such antithesis.'

But to have got as far as this on the strength of the Prelude to Act One of 'Lohengrin' will perhaps seem like initiating a Bacchanalian orgy with one glass of South African port. The piece of 'Lohengrin' in question is merely sugary,

scarcely alcoholic, the work of a decadent sensibility, perhaps, but one sees no evidence of decay on the grand scale. Sentimentality would seem the worst accusation one could make. Perhaps that is because we have tasted the stronger potions of Richard Strauss and Alban Berg. But for Baudelaire the piece contained - and again the italics are his : 'la béatitude spirituelle et physique, de l'isolement; de la contemplation de quelquechose infiniment grand et infiniment beau; d'une lumière intense qui rejouit les yeux et l'âme jusqu'à la pâmoison; et enfin la sensation de l'espace entendu jusqu' aux dernières limites concevables.' The sensations Baudelaise describes here, are to be found also in his accounts of drug-taking in 'Les Paradis Artificiels'. Indeed, he adds, speaking of the music of Wagner in general: 'Il semble parfois, en écoutant cette musique ardente et despotique, qu'on retrouve peintes sur le fond des ténèbres, déchiré par la rêverie, les vertiginenses conceptions de l'opium.' The music, once more like the drug, becomes an addiction: 'Ma volupté avait été si forte et si terrible, que je ne pouvais m'empêcher d'y vouloir retourner sans cesse.'

In section four of the same essay Baudelaire tells us that an artist, 'un homme, vraiment digne de ce grand nom, doit posséder quelque chose d'essentiellement sui genesis, par la grace de quoi il est lui et non un autre.' In 'L'Oeuvre et la Vie de Delacroix' he admires the artist for 'une passion immense doublée d'une volonté formidable,' and we learn that 'Tout en lui était énergie, mais énergie dérivant des nerfs et de la volonté...' With Richard Wagner that which unforgettably characterises the master, 'c'est

l'intensité nerveuse, la violence dans la passion et dans la volonté.' 'Always just five steps from the hospital,' as Nietzsche was to say, 'Nothing but quite modern problems, nothing but the problems of a great city!' And Baudelaire:

'Par l'énergie passionée de son expression il est actuellement le représentant le plus vrai de la nature moderne. . . Tout ce qu'impliquent les mots: volonté, désir, concentration, intensité nerveuse, explosion, se sent et se fait dans ses oeuvres.'

Avowing that in matters of art moderation has never seemed to him 'le signe d'une nature artistique vigoureuse,' Baudelaire admits and embraces the implications of Nietzsche's jibe,'five steps from the hospital': 'J'aime', he says 'ces excès de santé, ces débordements de la volonté. . . qui, dans la vie ordinaire, marquent souvent la phase, pleine de délices, succédant à une grande crise morale ou physique.'

It seems strange that human nature should ever have reached such a pitch, stranger still that it should wish to remain there, held up in mid-air, as it were, by the action of the will. For inevitably must follow the fall into lassitude, the disintegration into nullity. The addictis at once, in Baudelaire's phrase 'le victime et le bourreau.'

In writing of Baudelaire it is customary to introduce the question of Poe and to conclude either(a) that Poe did not count for as much as Baudelaire insisted or (b) that had Baudelaire understood English better he would have cared for Poe's writings a good deal less. The second of these conclusions is the more useful, especially where Poe's verse is concerned, but when

Baudelaire affirms that along with Joseph de Maistre Edgar Poe taught him to think I think we must take him at his word.* The influence is not primarily a literary one in the narrower sense. Two natures, identically decayed, come into touch. Baudelaire observes in the garish style and the lurid psychological allegories of the American a reflection of his own love of macabre sensationalism and in addition to that, in all the details of poems, stories and biography, more than a hint of a road to excess identical with his own. Coming upon 'Ligeia' and reading the quotation from the mystic Joseph Glanville which stands at the opening of the story, he must have recognised with that thrilling of the nerves he so loved to describe, a more than kindred temperament at work - the motto might, indeed, have been his own: 'And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigour? For God is but a great Will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.'

The will was the key to Poe's work as it was to Baudelaire's spirituality. Mr. Eliot has remarked that 'Baudelaire's notion of beatitude certainly tended to the wishy-washy.' I think one may go further than that: his entire idea of spirituality is governed by this desire for nervous heightening of the senses:

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* 'De Maistre et Edgar Poe m'ont appris à raisonner'. - 'Mon Coeur Mis à Nu'. — The title is borrowed from Poe's 'Marginalia', 'My Heart Laid Bare' being the suggested name of the book 'no man will ever dare write.'

Soyez beni, mon Dieu, qui donnez la souffrance
Comme un divin remède a nos impuretés
Et comme la *meilleure* et la plus pure essence
Qui prépare les forts aux saintes voluptés!

Having forcibly removed the ground of his natural feelings, his instinctive consciousness, he replaces this with a willed spirituality, which is more of an impurity than the 'impurities' he has got rid of. It is a pathological condition to which he attains, lifted into a religious absolute. In Poe he found a man who experienced and desired the same 'spiritual' gratification.

The best account of the 'spirituality' of 'Ligeia' (derived from the relationship of Poe and his wife Virginia) is given by Lawrence in the essay contained in 'Studies in Classic American Literature: 'In spiritual love (and I think it is clear in what sense Lawrence is using the term here), the contact is purely nervous. The nerves in the lovers are set vibrating in unison like two instruments. The pitch can rise higher and higher. But carry this too far, and the nerves begin to break, to bleed, as it were, and a form of death sets in.

'The trouble about man is that he insists on being master of his own fate, and he insists on oneness. For instance, having discovered the ecstasy of spiritual love. . . he wants his nerves to be set vibrating in the entire and exhilarating unison with the nerves of another being, and by this means he acquires an ecstasy of vision, he finds himself in glowing unison with all the universe.

'But as a matter of fact this glowing unison is only a temporary thing, because the first law of life is that each organism is isolate in itself, it must return to its own isolation.'

Thus Baudelaire, the dandy who shut himself within himself, who said wittily of pantheism 'Moi c'est, tout c'est moi', would at another time, seek this glowing unison 'with all the universe' and (with the aid of hachisch), far in excess of anything the relatively mild Jean-Jacques had imagined, mingle his soul with Nature - an artificially fabricated Nature, of course: 'De temps en temps la personalité disparaît. L'objectivité qui fait certains poètes panthéistes et aussi les grands comédiens devient telle, que vous vous confondez avec les êtres extérieurs. Vous voici arbre mugissant au vent et racontant à la nature des mélodies végétales. Maintenant vous planez dans l'azur du ciel immensément grandi.' ('Du Vin et Du Haschisch'.)

There are, of course important differences between Baudelaire and Poe, but their illnesses follow the same pattern. 'Poe', says Lawrence 'had experienced the ecstacies of extreme spiritual love. And he wanted those ecstacies and nothing but those ecstacies..... He set up his will against the whole of the limitations of nature.' This provides also a just account of Baudelaire's spirituality and Baudelaire himself would seem to admit as much in 'Les Paradis Artificiels': 'Hélas! Les vices de l'homme, si pleins d'horreur qu'on les suppose, contiennent la preuve (quand ce ne serait que leur infinie expansion!) de son goût de l'infini; seulement, c'est un goût qui se trompe souvent de route.' (Italics mine.) The 'wrong way' of getting there signifies by means of drugs, but what there implies never varies: drugs may be the substitute spiritual gratification, but the spiritual gratification itself means living continually on the stretch, in a

state of tension, though without the sense of guilt drug-taking brings with it: 'Il est certain que'une élévation constante du désir, une tension des forces spirituelles vers le ciel, serait le régime le plus propre a créer cette santé morale, si éclantante et si glorieuse . . . c'est pourquoi je préfère considérer cette condition anormale de l'esprit comme une véritable grâce .... une espèce d'excitation angélique.' (Italics mine.)

Together with the taste for 'l'infini' two other words are of the greatest importance in Baudelaire's vocabulary: 'volupté' and 'mensonge.' If he is being dishonest with the reader, he frequently reveals the fact by the way he uses these words. In 'Les Paradis Artificiels' he concerns himself to a great extent with how the 'infini' men seek may be a 'mensonge', but the 'real' infinite he proposes, as I have attempted to show, comes to little more than a 'mensonge' itself. It turns out a lie because he tries to make it into a 'volupté' and his 'voluptés' almost invariably lack the inner harmony which produces pleasure. Thus in the sonnet 'Le Rebelle' where an angel holds the sinner by his hair and tells him that by obeying the rules one experiences 'la volupté vraie aux durables appas,' the sinner replies simply, 'Je ne veux pas.' - a 'Je ne veux pas' which voices the whole obstinacy of man's misdirected volition, his will towards evil, towards his own artificial 'volupté'. And that is the chief 'mal' in 'Fleurs du Mal.' In the introductory poem we are told that worse than all the other howling monsters 'Dans la ménagerie infâme de nos vices,' there exists 'l'Ennui,' and it is in the state of 'ennui' that man begins to invent his 'passions' and his

artificial paradises, to satiate himself with 'voluptés.'

In 'L'Amour de Mensonge' Baudelaire characteristically succeeds in being honest and absolutely dishonest on the score of 'volupté' in the course of four lines. He contemplates his 'chère indolente' with her 'morbide attrait,' concluding:

> Mais ne suffit-il pas que tu sois l'apparence,
> Pour rejouir un coeur qui fuit la vérité?
> Qu'importe ta bêtise ou ton indifférence?
> Masque ou décor, salut! J'adore ta beauté.

Line one: she is indeed 'L'apparence.' That is true. Line two: he flees from truth certainly. That is honest enough. Line three: what do her stupidity and indifference matter? - the 'mensonge' is about to be accepted. Line four: 'Salut!' - he has swallowed it! There appears no irony here, nothing so adult, but merely a foolhardy gesture, perfectly true to human experience, but quite inadequate as a considered statement about it. Thus, the 'mensonge' in Baudelaire which should be the thing observed in human conduct, so often becomes the thing offered as the poem:

> Volupté, torture des âmes!.....
> Volupté, sois toujours ma reine!
> (La Prière d'un Païen.)

'La volupte' unique et suprême de l'amour', says Baudelaire in an epigram which has become famous, 'gît dans la certitude de faire le mal.' Mr Eliot, in an equally well known passage, comments: 'This means, I think, that Baudelaire has perceived that what distinguishes the relations of man and woman from the copulation of beasts is the knowledge of Good and Evil. . . Having an imperfect, vague romantic conception of Good, he was at least able to understand that the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring than the natural, 'life-giving' cheery automatism of

the modern world. For Baudelaire, sexual operation is at least something not analogous to Kruschen Salts.' Now it has always seemed to me that, in this passage, Mr. Eliot has given Baudelaire rather more than the benefit of the doubt by forcing the two alternatives, either sex as Kruschen Salts and cherry automatism or sex as sin. There exists, after all, a further alternative, which Baudelaire simply refused to recognise. Lawrence does not believe in the cheery automatism of the modern world, either, but he can say: 'I always labour at the same thing, to make the sex relation valid and precious, not shameful.' Baudelaire's aphorism represents, surely, something less than Eliot would have us believe. 'Volupté' in this context means, one feels, nothing more nor less than a sneaking adolescent thrill, a perverse pleasure in disobeying 'le Règle' mentioned in 'Le Rebelle'. Baudelaire cultivates his shame like his hysteria, using it as a 'volupté' to excite the nerves: 'When sin led to pleasure (volupté) as M. Sartre has said so well, 'pleasure profitted from sin.'

I am conscious that in my account of Baudelaire, I have scarcely attempted to demonstrate his greatness as a poet, being concerned mainly with the background of thoughts and feelings which went to make up the poetry. My account does not, I think, invalidate the incontestable greatness of the poems. It tries to show why Baudelaire was in the position to write, for example, the great moral conclusion of a poem like 'Femmes Damnées,' a poem which offers itself for comparison with that piece of Swinburnian nonsense 'Lesbos' (both among the pieces condemned by

the tribunal). The latter plays about for fifteen stanzes with perverse material perversely handled. The former, with the same material, looks at it with an entirely disenchanted and objective eye; the hell he describes is Baudelaire's own:

> Descendez, descendez, lamentables victimes,
> Descendez le chemin de l'enfer éternel!
> Plongez au plus profond du gouffre où tous les crimes,
> Flagellés par un vent qui ne vient pas du ciel,
>
> Bouillonnent pêle-mêle avec un bruit d'orage.
> Ombres folles, courez au but de vos désirs;
> Jamais vous ne pourrez assouvir votre rage,
> Et votre châtiment naîtra de vos plaisirs.

He spoke for a generation of urban neurotics, cut off from the social body and losing itself in subjectivity. The temptations he describes have, perhaps, changed their form for us, but they are still there. The will is still our most diseased portion. The great city is still the focus of our life. The people he met with in the subterranean room to which the devil conducted him in 'Le Joueur Généreux' (Spleen de Paris) have a look which we recognise only too easily: 'Si je voulais essayer de définir d'une manière quelconque l'expression singulière de leurs regards, je dirais, que jamais je vis d'yeux brillant plus énergiquement de l'horreur de l'ennui et du désir immortel de se sentir vivre.'

Writing of Baudelaire one invariably feels tempted towards an 'and yet'. His range of destructive feeling, it has been argued, was aggravated by the encroaching vulgarity of the society he lived in. To a point this is no doubt true. But like those other French artists of the nineteenth century, defeated by society and

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when thrown back on themselves, defeated by self-consciousness - Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Laforgue, Jarry - with Baudelaire, there is an ultimate refusal of self-responsibility. One does not fight a bad society by wilfully disabling oneself. Righteous anger is a necessity, but behind the righteous anger there must, in Wordsworth phrase, quoted in Chapter Two, be

> central peace, subsisting at the heart
> of endless agitation.

And the principle modern artist to keep alive within himself the balanced self-responsibility which Wordsworth so notably embodies, despite the anger at human stupidity and despite the unending battle against materialistic vulgarity, is D.H. Lawrence.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Basis for the Natural:
a study of D.H. Lawrence

'Le Dandy doit aspirer à être sublime, sans interruption. Il doit vivre et dormir devant un miroir' - Baudelaire: 'Mon Coeur Mis A Nu'.

'Lord, preserve in me that chastity of the writer: not to look in the glass'. - Rozanov: 'Fallen Leaves'. (Quoted by D.H. Lawrence in his review of that book).

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We have examined up to this point two modes of consciousness, the organic and the inorganic, the integral and the split. In Wordsworth we observed that pure flow of the organic; in Coleridge the hesitation between the two modes, the uncertainties of the human psyche once its flow has been interrupted and an element of mechanism has intervened. In the work of Baudelaire, the inorganic has triumphed and the mechanical power of the will has become the dominant force. Among the artists of the twentieth century, it is principally D.H. Lawrence who speaks once more for the organic and examines most profoundly that split in human consciousness which, during the past one hundred and fifty years, the development of society has deepened and which has provided the subject of a great part of nineteenth and twentieth century literature.

It is not in 'Sons and Lovers', or in the earlier and largely unsuccessful novels, 'The Trespasser' and 'The White Peacock' that the essentially Lawrencian genius is to be seen most deeply engaged, but in that incomparable work 'The Rainbow'. The composition of 'The Rainbow' marks a new kind of sensuous exactness in the modern novel and achieves a new contact with both the world of Nature and the world of instinctive awareness. In what sense 'The Rainbow' is new and is characteristic of Lawrence's genius, a comparison with passages from two other writers - one writing at an earlier date than that of 'The Rainbow', the other at a later - will help to illustrate. The first passage comes from 'Madame Bovary' a book which Lawrence admired and of which he made

made an interesting limiting criticism*; it describes the arrival of Charles Bovary at the Rouaults' farm in Chapter 3:

'Il arriva un jour vers trois heures; tout le monde était aux champs; il entra dans la cuisine, mais n'aperçut point d'abord Emma; les auvents étaient fermés. Par les fentes du bois, le soleil allongeait sur les pavés de grandes raies minces, qui se brisaient a l'angle des meubles et tremblaient au plafond. Des mouches, sur la table, montaient le long des verres qui avaient servi, et bourdonnaient en se noyant au fond, dans le cidre resté. Le jour qui descendait par la cheminee, veloutant la suie de la plaque, bleuissait un peu les cendres froides. Entre la fenêtre et le foyer, Emma cousait; elle n'avait point de fichu, on voyait sur les épaules nues de petites gouttes de sueur'.

The exactness of Flaubert conveys what is seen by the eye, his description being cut free of all that is irrelevant, his eye focussed upon the object, his pen transcribing that condition of focus into hard, concrete, precise statements, registered with sensuousness but detachment. The life of the passage comes from the close observation of visual fact, the effect of light, the texture of soot, the colour of cinders, the drowning flies and the sweat drops on Emma's shoulders. The next passage is the description in James Joyce's 'Ulysses' of Stephen Dedalus's walk along the beach:

'The grainy sand had gone from under his feet. He trod again a damp, crackling mast, razor-shells, squeaking pebbles, that on the unnumbered pebbles beat, woods sieved by the shipworm, lost Armada. Unwholesome sandpits waited to suck his treading soles, breathing upward sewage breath. He coasted them, walking warily. A porter-bottle stood up, stogged to its waist, in the cakey sand-dough. A sentinel: isle of dreadful thirst. Broken hoops on the shore; at the land a maze of dark cunning nets; further away chalk-scrawled back-doors and on the higher beach a drying-line with two crucified shirts'.

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* See Lawrence's introduction to his translation of Giovanni Verga's 'Cavalleria Rusticana': 'I think it is a final criticism against 'Madame Bovary' that people such as Emma Bovary and her husband Charles simply are too insignificant to carry the full weight of Gustave Flaubert's sense of tragedy'.

The imagination displayed in this piece is both visual and auditory; in 'breathing upward sewage breath' we have also the sense of smell. The 'stream-of-consciousness' method of writing in which thought and description are mingled, a quotation from Shakespeare ('that on the unnumbered pebbles beat') being thrown up among the elements of the scene, is quite different from Flaubert, but the tone of the exact description links with that of 'Madame Bovary' and the quality of the descriptive prose comes from undeniably Flaubertian parentage. The effect strikes one as more fluid than Flaubert, but the fluidity has a firm basis in the Flaubertian language of precise exposition. Lawrence's sensuousness, his exactness and his fluidity are of another kind:

'... The young corn waved and was silken and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and with hand on the bridle-rings, drew the heaving of the horses after their will.

'In Autumn the partridges whirred up, birds in flocks blew like spray across the fallow, rooks appeared in the gray, watery heavens, and flew cawing into the winter. Then the men sat by the fire in the house where the women moved about with surety, and the limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day.'

The passage from Lawrence contains that 'blood-awareness' and 'blood-intimacy' of which he speaks. It moves on a different plane of consciousness from either Flaubert's or Joyce's, with its vibrations and overtones of a vision which is more primitive and at the same time, richer. The passage

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is not 'hard' in the way that Flaubert is hard through detachment, but neither is it, in any sense, lush. Its fluidity is different from the fluidity of Joyce in that one becomes aware, not merely of the action of the mind as a 'stream of consciousness' accompanying the objective scenes and events, but rather of the deep current of integral human vitality which is the basis for the organic sensibility. The truly organic begins with this at-oneness in the blood, but it does not necessarily end there. 'The blood' is not - contrary to common belief - everything for Lawrence. It is something to be surpassed in the final analysis:

'But the woman wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy. Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with Church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faced outwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom; whereas the Brangwen men faced inwards to the teaming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins'.

As one may define Lawrence's genius, in the particular instance by way of comparison with Flaubert and Joyce, so may one do so in the general intention of his novels. Flaubert, if we may be allowed to oversimplify a great figure of a great complexity, was the novelist of the will: Joyce- with a similar apology - the novelist of the secondary or mechanical unconscious. First, let us look at Lawrence vis-à-vis Flaubert. When Flaubert wrote to Baudelaire concerning his poetry, he put at the top of his list of favourite poems 'Avec ses vêtements ondoyantes et nacrées' ('Fleurs des Mal, XXVI)*

* This poem we have already placed in its context of ideas of coldness and sterility in Chapter Three.

and congratulated its author because, as he says, 'vous chantez la chair sans l'aimer, d'une façon triste et détachée qui m'est sympathique. Vous êtes résistant comme le marbre et pénétrant comme un brouillard d'Angleterre'. (Letter of Gustave Flaubert, July I3th, I857.) This letter gives us a commentary on Flaubert's own method of detachment where, as Lawrence himself has put it, 'the will of the writer is to be greater than and lord over all he writes'. There is always in Flaubert the feeling of that 'sans l'aimer', an ultimate marble coldness, a disgust with the flesh that is implied rather than indulged because indulgence would betray the famous detachment: 'elle n'avait point de fichu, on voyait sur les épaules nues de petites gouttes de sueur.' On feels that Flaubert was pleased with that touch of the exact, that he responded with a kind of sensuality to the suggestion of sweat drops on naked shoulders and that part of him hung back with a faint disgust. He detaches the instance and presents it outside of his own divided feelings about it. Lawrence works in an antithetical manner, from within the feeling about a thing, but from within a feeling that is integral in itself. This difference in attitude is well illustrated by certain of the remarks of Lawrence in his review of Thomas Mann's 'Death in Venice', about the Flaubertian type of writer and the way in which Mann depends from the Flaubertian tradition and also diagnoses its sickness. Now Lawrence does not try for artistic detachment in the sense that Flaubert pursued it,

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in the context of a kind of by-product of existence, a distillation of the experience of the artist-saint holding himself back from life within the confines of the will, controlling his senses by will, achieving his form by the pressure of will. In this sense Lawrence sees Mann as a disciple, in method, of Flaubert who wrote: 'I worked sixteen hours yesterday, today the whole day, and have at last finished one page'. 'Thomas Mann', says Lawrence, 'seems to me the last sick sufferer from the complaint of Flaubert. The latter stood away from life as from leprosy. And Thomas Mann, like Flaubert, feels vaguely that he has in him something finer

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than ever physical life revealed'. Mann characterises the Flaubertian artist-saint in the Ascenbach of 'Death in Venice' in whose person, as Lawrence comments, 'the artist has absorbed the man, and yet the man is there, like an exhausted organism on which a parasite has fed itself strong.* Mann himself gives the following description of Aschenbach: 'When he fell asleep, at the age of fifty three, one of his closest observers said of him: 'Aschenbach has always lived like this'- and he gripped his fist hard clenched; 'never like this'- and he let his hand lie easily on the arm of the chair'.

Lawrence himself in writing, wishes to bring into play a different centre of being from that; he wishes to open his hand and, in opening it, to create a new prose and a new novel form from the sources of the organic. He expresses this in his description of Mann's style: 'And even while he has a rhythm in style, yet his work has none of the rhythm of a living thing, the rise of a poppy, then the after uplift of the bud, the shedding of the calyx and the spreading wide of the petals, the falling of the flower and the pride of the seed-head. There is an unexpectedness in this such as does not come from their(the stories) carefully plotted and arranged developments. Even 'Madame Bovary' seems to me dead in this respect to the living rhythm of the whole work. While it is there in 'Macbeth' like life itself'. The final remark on 'Macbeth' is an important one for one feels in 'The Rainbow' that this is what Lawrence is striving for, the Shakespearian fertility of invention and symbolism, the closeness of texture which caused G.Wilson Knight to refer to the Shakespearian pattern as 'an extended metaphor'. But this is to anticipate our examination of Lawrence's first great novel.

Let us now turn to Joyce as the novelist of the secondary or mechanical unconscious. The 'inner life' of Joyce's characters in 'Ulysses' takes place largely just below the surface. The mind is always ticking over, the memory throwing up fragments, the cerebral consciousness playing about objects&

*One sees the same kind of thing in Rilke with his admiration for Bandelaire and his acceptance of Rodin's dictum, 'On doit trouver le bonheur dans son art'. 'All great men' he writes'have let their life become overgrown like an old path and have carried everything into their art. Their life is atrophied like an organ

and then leaving them. The objects sink out of memory and then unexpectedly - on the beach, in the street, at a funeral-emerge from the stratum of the mechanical, non-vital unconscious and coalesce in a new unity, the unity of debased fancy. Thus Leopold Bloom unrolls his newspaper-baton idly and idly reads:

'What is home without
Plumtree's Potted Meat?
Incomplete.
With it an abode of bliss'

and fragments of this emerge from time to time from the hinterland of the mind, mingled with other fragments - an advertisement for Ginger Ale, 'Love's Old Sweet Song', the problem of how to pronounce 'voglio', the mysteries of immortality and metempsychosis a cheap novelette by Paul de Kock and so on. In Bloom one has a very accurate rendering of the rootless urban mind, eternally at a loose end, hungry for items of news, of popular science; half-educated, opinionated, a dead-end in human development. In Stephen Dedalus, the artist-intellectual, one has basically the same kind of consciousness; he is no more organic in sensibility than Bloom, even though he prefers Elizabethan songs to Meyerbeer, again it is in the mechanical unconscious that Joyce locates his chief movements of mind.

To the exploration of this mechanical unconscious Joyce brings the concentration, the humour and the exactness of genius, but it is genius of a definite and limited kind. His own development into a more and more involved cerebration, his obsession with the pun, his linguistic fantasias in 'Finnegan's Wake', lead us again by way of the mechanical unconscious to a dead-end. Lawrence had his own rather extreme comment to make on this, when, in 1928 he wrote to the Huxleys, having received a copy of 'Transition' in which a portion of 'Finnegan's Wake' appeared: 'My God, what a clumsy olla putrida James Joyce is. Nothing but old fags and cabbage stumps of quotations from the Bible and the rest, stewed in the juice of deliberate, journalistic dirty-mindedness - what old and hard-worked staleness masquerading as the all-new!' And again in a letter to

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That they no more use.' (Letters 1899-1902, page 10).

to Harry Crosby written three weeks later, he says: 'Joyce bores me stiff - too terribly would-be and done-on-purpose, utterly without spontaneity or real life'. Whatever else there is in Joyce that Lawrence misses, he is right in indicating the feeling of staleness and of the lack of 'real life'. The 'life' which resides in the rootless, punning humour comes from the stratum just below consciousness running about aimlessly from one half-relevant thought to another'* 'Finnegan's Wake' is an incredible feat of language, but despite the kind of relevance Joyce imposes on the irrelavant, there is an unreality about it: it is a freak conceived without any proper contract of understanding between writer and reader. Any fact, any piece of information which Joyce may have picked up, may and does appear. One thinks of Edmund Wilson's advice in 'Classics and Commercials': 'If you have not tried 'Finnegan's Wake' you cannot do better than get it and get the Campbell-Robinson key, and prepare to have them around for years'. If this is so, it would seem a limiting criticism of Joyce as an artist that one of his major works should require a veritable encyclopaedia of topographical, philosophical and other abstract information which happened to catch his notice.

In writing of Flaubert and Joyce at some length, I have been concerned with illustrating the manner in which inorganic sensibility expresses itself in the modern novel and particularly in the case of Joyce, the cul-de-sac activity of cerebration it may pursue. I wish now to turn to 'The Rainbow' and examine its themes, its achievement and its organic approach.

'The Rainbow' contains almost all the specifically Lawrencian themes: the need for spontaneous-creative fulness of being, for balanced relationships where the individual stays self-responsible and does not try to 'merge' with the other person; the interplay between man and Nature, between man and his childhood; the impingement of an industrial civilisation upon a more organic one and the problems which this brings to bear upon the

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* See page 170 for the full context of this quotation

the individual life. Lawrence explores his themes in the experience of three generations at the Marsh farm, beginning in the 1840's with Tom Brangwen, passing to his step-daughter and her husband Will and thence to the brink of the modern scene with their daughter Ursula and her experience of that scene as an elementary school teacher.

Tom Brangwen marries a Polish woman, Lydia Lensky. This is the first important relationship of the book and not the least important aspect of the relationship is Lawrence's account of the way in which the woman, the widow of a refugee, comes alive once more to the reality of life after a kind of emotional death. It is a situation Lawrence explored again and again - in the short story 'Sun', in 'The Lost Girl', in 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'. The striking thing about the account here lies in its almost Wordsworthian character of being absolutely true to the deepest levels of human feeling. The return to life comes slowly and painfully. It begins with a veritably painful contact with Nature and, through Nature, the opening once again of the arteries of life, the renewed awareness of the potency of childhood:

'She was sent to Yorkshire, to nurse an old rector in his rectory by the sea. This was the first shake of the Kaleidoscope that brought in front of her eyes something she must see. It hurt her brain, the open country and the moors. It hurt her and hurt her. Yet it forced upon her as something living, it roused some potency of his childhood in her, it had some relation to her.

'There was green and silver and blue in the air about her now. And there was a strange insistence of light from the sea, to which she must attend. Primroses glimmered around, many of them, and she stooped to the disturbing influence near her feet, she even picked one or two flowers, faintly remembering in the new colour of life, what had been. All the day long, as she sat at the upper window, the light came off the sea, constantly, constantly, without refusal, till it seemed to bear her away,

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and the noise of the sea created a drowsiness in her, a relaxation like sleep. Her automatic consciousness gave way a little, she stumbled sometimes, she had a poignant, momentary vision of her living child, that hurt her unspeakably. Her soul roused to attention'.

But the healing does not come all at once. There are back-slidings into the old state of deadness, an inability to turn fully to the living world: 'And she shrank away again, back into her darkness, and for a long while remained blotted safely away from the living'. Lawrence conveys her state with complete symbolical accuracy: 'She could neither wake nor sleep. As if crushed between the past and the future, like a flower that comes above-ground to find a great stone lying above it, she was helpless'. But again Lydia is attracted out of herself by seeing the nest of a thrush in the garden and again, afterwards, she slips back, away from life, almost wilfully, always hesitating upon the threshold of being: 'Always, however, between-whiles she lapsed into the old unconsciousness, indifference and there was a will in her to save herself from living any more. But she would wake in the morning one day and feel her blood running, feel herself lying open like a flower unsheathed in the sun, insistent and potent with demand'.

It is this condition of inner division which makes the initial stages of the Tom-Lydia relation so painful and so difficult for them both. 'Love', as Lawrence says in 'Fantasia of the Unconscious', 'is a thing to be <u>learned</u>, through centuries of patient effort'. And one sees what he meant in his description of their relationship, Tom wishing for the relation of wholeness, Lydia always drawn back upon her misery: 'And after a few days, gradually she closed again, away from him, was sheathed over, impervious to him, oblivious. Then a black, bottomless despair became real to him, he knew what he had lost. He felt he had lost it for good, he knew what it was to have been in communication with her, and to be cast off again. In misery, his heart like a heavy stone, he went about unliving.'

However, the relationship <u>is</u> ultimately a success,

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a creative reality, an example of a possible fulfilment in an organic way. It is, one might say, the absolute antithesis of all that Baudelaire conceived to be the essence of exchange between the sexes, the Lawrencian alternative to a divided spirituality. Lawrence comments on Tom's marriage with a device of the greatest artistry - a wedding speech made by Tom at the wedding of Anna, his step-daughter, and Will Brangwen, his nephew. This speech of Tom's, naïve, clumsy, interrupted by the other guests, gives in an almost off-hand way, which is not at all off-hand but the result of the novelist's most delicate control, the reality of marriage for Lawrance and of Tom's marriage. The scene is done with a most effective balance, the serious undertone always being present beneath the wordy eloquence of the portly farmer and the coarse interjections of the guests who have missed Tom's experience in all its depth and who are ordinary in a way that Tom, for all his earthiness, is not:

'Marriage', he began, his eyes twinkling and yet quite profound, for he was deeply serious and hugely amused at the same time, 'Marriage', he said, speaking in the slow, full-mouthed way of the Brangwens, 'is what we're made for -'.

'Let him talk', said Alfred Brangwen, slowly and inscrutably, 'let him talk'. Mrs Alfred darted indignant eyes at her husband.

'A man', continued Tom Brangwen, 'enjoys being a man: for what purpose was he made a man, if not to enjoy it?'

'That's a true word', said Frank, floridly.

'And likewise', continued Tom Brangwen, 'a woman enjoys being a woman; at least we surmise she does - '

'Oh don't you bother - 'called a farmer's wife.

'You may back your life they'd be summisin', said Frank's wife.

'Now', continued Tom Brangwen, 'for a man to be a man, it takes a woman -'

'It does that', said a woman grimly.

'And for a woman to be a woman, it takes a man - ' continued Tom Brangwen.

'All

'All speak up, men', chimed in a feminine voice.

'Therefore we have marriage', continued Tom Brangwen.

'Hold, hold,' cried Alfred Brangwen. 'Don't run us off our legs'.

And in dead silence the glasses were filled. The bride & bridegroom, two children, sat with intent, shining faces at the head of the table, abstracted.

'There's no marriage in heaven', went on Tom Brangwen, 'but on earth there is marriage.'

'That's the difference between 'em', said Alfred Brangwen, mocking.

'Alfred', said Tom Brangwen, 'keep your remarks till afterwards, and then we'll thank you for them,- There's very little else, on earth, but marriage. You can talk about making money, or saving souls. You can save your own soul seven times over, and you may have a mint of money, but your soul goes gnawin', gnawin', gnawin', and it says there's something it must have. In heaven there is no marriage. But on earth there <u>is</u> marriage, else heaven drops out and there's no bottom to it'.

Laughter and jeers sound round the table, difficult theological points are to be raised by the sceptical guests, 'but Tom Brangwen was inspired':

'An Angel's got to be more than a human being,' he continued. 'So I say, an Angel is the soul of a man and woman in one: they rise at the Judgment Day, as one Angel -'

'Praising the Lord' said Frank.

'Praising the Lord' repeated Tom.

And one takes seriously Tom's 'Praising the Lord' - or rather one is meant to take it in the same frame of mind that Tom entered on his speech,'deeply serious and highly amused'. For Tom's marriage is to him a religious reality, a door into the unknown and, as we are told by Lawrence, a transfiguration of his daily self, but a transfiguration which involves the natural and does not cripple it in some rootless spirituality:

'Their coming together now, after two years of married life

life, was much more wonderful to them than it had been before. It was the entry into another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation. Their feet trod strange ground of knowledge, their footsteps were lit up with discovery. Wherever they walked, it was well, the world re-echoed round them in discovery ...

They had passed through the doorway into the further space, where movements were so big, that it contained bonds and constraints and labours, and still was complete liberty. She was the doorway to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission'.

Now it is the strength of 'The Rainbow' that, like 'The Prelude', it takes up into itself that pattern which has 'the rhythm of life itself' which Lawrence misses in Mann. Lawrence's originality is to ground this rhythm in the individual relationship, in the power to remain individually self-balanced and then to achieve balance with the other person and to incorporate thereby the instinctive man into the whole man and achieve a living basis for the natural by avoiding the mechanisms of will and idea. A further symbolical representation of this theme appears in the scene where Anna and Will, the second generation, pile up the sheaves of corn by night. It is significant that the pattern of individual balance is symbolically conveyed both through the relations of the man and woman to one another and of both in a blood-intimacy with the world of Nature:

'You take this row', she said to the youth, and passing on, she stooped in the next row of lying sheaves, grasping her hands in the tresses of the oats, lifting the heavy corn in either hand, carrying it, as it hung heavily against her, to the cleared space, where she set the two sheaves sharply down, bringing them together with a faint, keen clash. Her

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two bulks stood leaning together. He was coming, walking shadowily with the gossamer dusk, carrying his two sheaves. She waited near by. He set his sheaves with a keen, faint clash, next to her sheaves. They rode unsteadily. He tangled the tresses of corn. It hissed like a fountain. He looked up and laughed...

'They worked together, coming and going, in a rhythm, which carried their feet and their bodies in tune. She stooped, she lifted the burden of sheaves, she turned her face to the dimness where he was, and went with her burden over the stubble. She hesitated, set down her sheaves, there was a swish and hiss of mingling oats, he was drawing near, and she must turn again. And there was the flaring moon laying bare her bosom again, making her drift and ebb like a wave.

'He worked steadily, engrossed, threading backwards and forwards like a shuttle across the strip of cleared stubble, weaving the long line of riding shocks, nearer and nearer to the shadowy trees, threading his sheaves with hers'.

But the relation of Will and Anna does not finally achieve the positive wholeness of Tom's and Lydia's. Lawrence criticises both implicitly: Will is too much the creature of the blood, he has not gone creatively forward, he is 'in spirit uncreated'; Anna 'jeers at the soul', she is too much the believer in 'the omnipotence of mind'. Yet at the same time their failure is relative and there exists between them the sense of darkness, a sacred and enriching darkness, haunting the back of the common day'.

In the third relation, between Ursula (daughter of Will & Anna) and Skrebensky, failure is absolute. Its sensual intensity turns out to be a lie and from the beginning it contains the seed of that lie; their essential antagonism emerges in the early stages of their friendship in the unforgettable dance scene in Chapter XI: 'She liked the dance: it eased her, put her into a sort of trance. But it was only a kind of waiting, a using up the time that intervened between her and her pure being'. All that follows is finally seen to be a falsehood. Mr Wilson

Knight

Knight, as we have said, has described the Shakespearian closeness of texture as 'an extended metaphor'. In many ways a Lawrence novel is an extended metaphor and one might summarise the antagonism between Ursula and Skrebensky as - to use the title of a later essay in 'Phoenix' - the individual versus the social consciousness. Ursula is capable, in the Wordsworthian sense, of the individual, spontaneous act, as where she gives her necklace (and her name) to the bargee's unchristened child and in the pure flame of relationship which kindles between her and the people of the barge, while Skrebensky stands aside, hard, disapproving the representative of 'accepted' social standards*. Skrebensky, one might say, is a metaphor (he is indeed, also a thoroughly realised character) for the kind of mass world which is impinging upon the organic world of the Marsh farm. This emerges in the conversation between him and Ursula as they walk - symbolically, through the symbolism is so implicity inwrought that it might almost go unnoticed - along the canal path between the world of the farm and 'the shuffling noise of the pits, the dark fuming stress of the town opposite'. Skrebensky is the soldier, the engineer:

'Would you like to go to war?' (asks Ursula)

'I? Well, it would be exciting. If there were a war I would want to go'.

A strange, distracted feeling came over her, a sense of potent unrealities.

'Why should you want to go?'

'I should be doing something, it would be genuine. It's a sort of toy-life as it is'.

'But what would you be doing if you went to war?'

'I would be making railways or bridges, working like a nigger'.

He is focussed upon the world of events, with an abstract, willed fascination. To him, the life of the present is a 'toy-life': he is more interested in building bridges, in 'settling the Mahdi' in the Sudan, in 'the result' ('the result matters'):

'Not to you - nor me (replies Ursula) - we don't care about

* Chap.XI

about Khartoum'.

'You want to have room to live in: and somebody has to make room'.

'But I don't want to live in the desert of Sahara - do you?' she replied, laughing with antagonism.

'I don't - but we've got to back up those who do'.

'Why have we?'

'Where is the nation if we don't?'

'But we aren't the nation. There are heaps of other people who are the nation.'

'They might say <u>they</u> weren't either'.

'Well, if everybody said it, there wouldn't be a nation. But I should still be myself'.'

But Skrebensky is not very passionately concerned with being himself and Ursula taunts irritate him. He needs the organisation and can only know his one existence as a member of it:

'I belong to the nation and must do my duty by the nation'.

'But when it didn't need your services in particular - when there <u>is</u> no fighting? What would you do then?'

He was irritated.

'I would do what everybody else does'.

'What?'

'Nothing. I would be in readiness for when I was needed'.

Skrebensky comes to represent a version of the inorganic man, working downwards from the mind, quite opposite from the kind of thing we have seen in Baudelaire. He is the abstract man of politics who has failed in his creative being and fallen into the nullity of mere formula. There are, it would seem, two alternatives before the sensibility which has lost its primary at-oneness: either the introversion of Baudelaire, turned in upon the self and disintigrating it, or the extraversion of a Skrebensky, looking only outwards towards social realities and, in the end, disintigrating <u>society</u> by the application of ideals without any organic relation to the instinctive needs of the social body. Both are significant psychological instances of the way in which the will divorced from

from the instincts and propogating ideas and ideals, progresses further and further into a void. Baudelaire's 'beatitude' and Skrebensky's Benthamism* are near relations - like Phillip Drunk and Phillip Sober in Stephen Dedalus's nightmare. Bearing in mind the depiction of Skrebensky, Lawrence's remarks on the mind and the will in 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious' have an immediate relevance:

'The mind is the dead end of life. But it has all the mechanical force of the non-vital universe. It is a great dynamo of super-mechanical force. Given the <u>will</u> as accomplice, it can even arrogate its machine motions and automatizations over the whole of life, till every tree becomes a clipped tea-pot and every man a useful mechanism. So we see the brain, like a great dynamo and accumulator, accumulating <u>mechanical</u> force and presuming to apply this mechanical force-control to the living unconscious, subjecting everything spontaneous to certain machine-principles called ideas or ideals.

'And the human will assists in this humiliating and sterilizing process. We don't know what the human will is. But we do know that it is a certain faculty belonging to every living organism; the faculty for self-determination'.

In the light of these remarks, the role of Skrebensky is clear enough:

'He went about at his duties, giving himself up to them. At the bottom of his heart his self, the soul that aspired and had true hope of self-effectuation lay as dead, still-born, a dead weight in his womb. Who was he, to hold important his personal connection? What did a man matter personally? He was

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* The label was attached by F.R. Leavis, in his interesting account of 'The Rainbow' ('Scrutiny', Vol. XVlll Nos. 3 and 4; Vol. XlX, No. 1) where he has commented at some length on the relation between Skrebensky's inadequacy as a lover and what may be called his 'public spirit','his good-citizen acceptance of the social function as the ultimate meaning of life ....'

was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity. His personal movements were small, and entirely subsidiary. The whole form must be ensured, not ruptured, for any personal reason whatsoever, since no personal reason could justify such a breaking. What did personal intimacy matter? One had to fill one's place in the whole, the great scheme of man's elaborate civilization, that was all. The Whole mattered - but the unit, the person had no importance, except as he represented the Whole'.

Blind in this belief, blind to his own needs and to the fact that his social beliefs do not really touch the needs of the many ('He thought that, because the community represents millions of people, therefore it must be millions of times more important than any individual, forgetting that the community is an abstraction from the many, and is not the many themselves,' he goes his own way, surrenders to the idea.

Ursula Brangwen, as she frees herself from the relation, feels her way back to life in a renewed contact with the natural world and it is from this world that she ultimately draws her strength in the face of the staleness of Skrebenky's world. The interaction of the two worlds is described in a key passage (Chap.XV) where Ursula watches a train and as her mood crystalizes about its changing symbolical meaning:

'Below she saw the villages and the woods of the weald (the scene is Sussex), and the train running bravely, a gallant little thing, running with all the importance of the world over the water meadows and into the gap of the downs, waving its white steam, yet all the while so little. So little, yet its courage carried it from end to end of the earth. Till there was no place where it did not go. Yet the downs, in magnificent indifference baring limbs and body to the sun, drinking sunshine and sea-wind and sea-wet cloud into its golden skin, with superb stillness and calm of being, was not the downs still more wonderful? The blind, pathetic, energetic courage of the train as it steamed tinily away through the patterned levels to the sea's dimness, so fast

and

and so energetic, made her weep. Where was it going? It was going nowhere, it was just going. So blind, so without goal or aim, yet so hasty! She sat on an old prehistoric earthwork and cried, and the tears ran down her face. The train had tunnelled all the earth, blindly and uglily'.

Like Lydia Lenksy, she is broken, but she still looks for the living clue to existence: 'In everything she saw she grasped and groped to find the creation of the living God, instead of the old, hard barren form of bygone living'. Unlike Lydia she does not feel again the rousing of 'some potency of her childhood', unlike Lydia the life of the farm would not be enough for her, for she has gone beyond the regions of mere blood-intimacy towards 'the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man', the world the Brangwen women had always looked towards for the sake of their children and where 'men...set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom'. Ursula has the old organic life behind and within her, but she is baulked in bringing it to a new perfection by the materialistic ugliness of the outer world. She is the consciousness of her family. She has taken up the accumulated riches of the organic life and has brought them to bear in the action of critical intelligence, an intelligence that has known the life of community and is faced only with the life of collectivity. As we see her finally she seems distanced into metaphor; she becomes the organic life unable to express itself, she becomes that life threatened by 'the triumph of horrible, amorphous angles and straight lines, the expression of corruption triumphant and unopposed, corruption so pure that it is hard and brittle: she saw the dun atmosphere over the blackened hills opposite, the dark blotches of houses, slate-roofed and amorphous, the old church-tower standing up in hideous obsoleteness above raw new houses on the crest of the hill, the amorphous, brittle hard edged new houses advancing from Beldover to meet the corrupt new houses from Lethley, the houses of Lethley

advancing

advancing to mix with the houses of Mainor, a dry brittle, terrible corruption spreading over the face of the land...' And still, in the midst of this, a crippled being, she grasps and gropes to find 'the creation of the living God'. That, indeed, summarises the essential Lawrencian concern - the desire for life and wholeness, religiously centred, and not the retreat into the imaginary compensations of an inturned world of sensibility. Ursula, with her combination of courage and intelligence, represents a Wordsworthian aspect of the organic sensibility - whose resilliance and whose firmness we honour with the name of character.

(ii)

In turning to Lawrence as essayist and theorist (before touching further on the novels) the same subject we have found, under its various aspects, in Wordsworth, Coleridge and Baudelaire, is still under review. What, he asks, is the nature of integral feeling? Again, as in the case of our three other writers, the investigation leads us back beneath the human consciousness, beneath the will; and for Lawrence the question becomes, what is the nature of basic human consciousness? Already we have seen what hints Coleridge and Wordsworth gave in that direction and how Baudelaire, hating the instinctive life as he did, tried to superimpose upon it the life of the conscious will, to deny the darkness within himself and to know himself as one might know the parts of a machine or the facets of an object, so poisoning the instinctive part of his being.

In so far as one reads Baudelaire in order to examine the content of his unconscious, one finds oneself in the anxiety-ridden world of Freudian psychology. Love scarcely exists except in the form of sublimated aggression. Tenderness is replaced by ego-centric gratification. Fulfilment is the mere 'detensioning' (the word is Freud's) of impulse, a process which would seem to argue the intervention and manipulation of the self-conscious mind rather than integral feeling arising from a deep, instinctive centre.

Thus

Thus the outlook of both Freud and Baudelaire might be summed up in the equation Nature equals Evil, in so far as they represent certain neurotic attitudes as being essentially grounded in the human unconscious.

It was against such a view of things that Lawrence, in 1923, produced his 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious'. Again we must resort to our distinction, first made in Chapter I, between the mechanical unconscious and the living unconscious. But before proceeding to 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious' let us look at Lawrence doing the distinction as a novelist: 'A cloud over the sun woke him to consciousness of his own thoughts; and he found with perplexity, that they were continually recurring to two periods of his life, the days after the death of his mother, and the time of his first deep estrangement from one he loved. After a bit he understood this. Now, as then, his mind had been completely divided into two parts: the upper running about aimlessly from one half relevant thought to another, the lower unconscious half labouring with some profound and unknowable change. This feeling of ignorant helplessness linked him with those past crises. His consciousness was like the light scurry of waves at full tide, when the deeper waters are pausing and gathering and turning home'.

Now it is on the same distinction as that contained in this passage that Lawrence bases his case against the Freudians. Lawrence, like Wordsworth before him, is concerned with asking: what is primary in man's nature and what is not? The second part of the question he sees in that context with which I have been principally occupied in these pages, of the conscious mind divided against the instincts and, as we remarked in the example of Baudelaire, <u>using</u> the instincts for its own perverse ends, deforming them and then turning round, as it were, to say, 'There's instinct, for you!' In Freud's description of the unconscious Lawrence detects the crossed strands of unconscious and conscious and observes the manner in which a deformation of the primary impulse

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has taken place:

'One thing...psychoanalysis all along the line fails to determine, and that is the nature of the pristine unconscious in man... When Adam and Eve became aware of sex in themselves, they became aware of that which was pristine in them, and which preceeded all knowing. But when the analyst discovers the incest motive in the unconscious, surely he is only discovering a term of humanity's suppressed idea of sex. It is not even suppressed sex-consciousness, but repressed. That is, it is nothing pristine, and anterior to mentality. It is the mind's ulterior motive. That is, the incest-craving is propogated by the mind itself even though unconsciously. The mind acts as incubus and procreator of its own horrors, deliberately unconsciously. And the incest motive is in its origin not a pristine impulse, but a logical extension of the existent idea of sex and love. The mind, that is, transfers the idea of incest into the affective-passional psyche, and keeps it there as a repressed motive'.

This account of the mind's workings (from Chapter I of 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious': 'Psychoanalysis versus Morality') points us to the real nature of the inorganic sensibility and of the primary unconscious. Baudelaire in saying 'There's instinct for you!' in actual fact does not prove that the natural is 'abominable'. He has failed to uncover what was primary and has deliberately locked himself into this chamber of (secondary) horrors created by the mental consciousness. He speaks the language of exacerbated sensibility. As Lawrence comments, in a letter to Aldous Huxley, placing Baudelaire between Byron and Wilde, '... they all did the same thing, or tried to: to kick off, or to intellectualise and so utterly falsify the phallic consciousness, which is the basic consciousness, and the thing we mean, in the best sense, by common sense'. (The Letters of D.H. Lawrence p.716) Baudelaire, as we have said, wanted most of all to know himself, in a negative and unhealthy way: 'He watched himself see' says M. Satre, 'he watched in order to see himself watch'. At the same time he

he never sought that ultimate self-knowledge which leads to inner freedom. It was a deliberately limited knowledge of the instincts he wanted in order to use it as a 'volupte'. And it is to this kind of act that Lawrence traces the real split between unconscious and conscious, between primary and secondary impulses in man's nature: 'It is', he continues in 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious', 'when the mind turns to consider and know the great affective passional functions and emotions that sin enters. Adam and Eve fell, not because they had sex, or even because they committed the sexual act, but because they became aware of their sex and the possibility of the act. When sex became to them a mental object - that is, when they discovered that they could deliberately enter upon and provoke sexual activity in themselves, then they were cursed and cast out of Eden'.

We have, then, to look deeper than Freud's accumulation of complexes or to Baudelaire's perverted unconscious for the root of our being. In Coleridge's phrase 'the lowest depth that the light of our Consciousness can visit even without a doubtful Glimmering is still at an unknown distance from the Ground'. For the Ground is, as Lawrence says 'prior to any mentality'. 'The true unconscious' as he summarises at the conclusion of Chapter I, 'is the well-head, the fountain of real motivity. The sex of which Adam and Eve became conscious derived from the very God who bade them not to be conscious of it...'

In Chapter II a further step can be taken. Having indicated the way in which he sees the human psyche, Lawrence can proceed toward the more particular. The life-cell of the individual is the unconscious, but, says Lawrence it is an individual unconscious and as such a tenuous and difficult thing to define. 'By the unconscious', he writes, 'we wish to indicate that essentially unique nature of every individual creature, which is, by its very nature,

un-

unanalysable, undefinable, inconceivable...'* Lawrence is unwilling to revert to the word 'soul' because of its many vague and devalued associations: 'As a matter of fact' he continues, 'soul would be a better word. By the unconscious we do mean the soul. But the word soul has been vitiated by idealistic use...'

Out of the unconscious, the life-cell, consciousness itself is created. This is what Lawrence wishes to indicate when he wrote to the psychoanalyst Dr. Trigant Burrow: 'One fights and fights for that living something that strives way down in the blood and creates consciousness'. Thus, like Coleridge and Wordsworth before him, Lawrence extends the meaning of the word 'organic' by clarifying the nature of consciousness and knowledge. 'This is indeed the point of all full knowledge,' he continues in Chapter II, 'that it is contained mainly within the unconscious, its mental or consciousness reference being a sort of extract or shadow'. 'Full knowledge' implies so much more than the floating debris of ideas and opinions that so often pass with us for 'intellect'. 'What am I?' asks Lawrence elsewhere, in 'The Novel and the Feelings' ('Phoenix p.756'), 'I'm supposed to be a sensible human being. Yet I carry a whole waste-paper basket of ideas at the top of my head, and in some other part of my anatomy, the dark continent of myself'.

It was his desire to set the dark continent of himself in right relation to the outer world, and the dark continent itself, not the waste-paper basket, was the starting point for the relation. For Lawrence true knowledge consisted in freeing the essential man then ceasing to try to 'know' him. In the second chapter of 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious', he expresses this with that humility which he is popularly supposed to lack: 'We have to try to recognise the true

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* Coleridge comes to mind once more on the solitariness of individual man: 'Man exists herein to himself and to God alone-yea! in how much truly to God! how much lies below his own consciousness'. (Anima Poetae P.31)

true nature and then leave the unconscious itself to prompt new movement and new being - the creative progress... But it needs a super-scientific grace before we can admit this first new item of knowledge'*

Chapter III undertakes a more detailed account of the 'creative unconscious' in its rôle in human relations. He returns to the state of the human psyche in childhood and at birth. The inevitably more abstract statement has behind it, as we would do well to remind ourselves, the experience which can justifiably proceed to general statement and which is so brilliantly manifest in the concrete intuitions of Lawrence the novelist. The strength and truth of the intuition comes directly from that earlier capacity of the novelist to make real the pre-mental world of the child in 'The Rainbow'. The following passage describes the childhood of Ursula Brangwen in Chapter Vlll:

'The child ran about absorbed in life, quiet, full of amusement. She did not notice things, nor changes nor alterations. One day she would find daisies in the grass, another day, apple-blossoms would be sprinkled white on the ground and she would run among it, for pleasure because it was there. Yet again birds would be pecking at the cherries, her father would throw cherries down from the tree all round her on the garden. Then the fields were full of hay.

'She did not remember what had been nor what would be, the outside things were there each day. She was always herself, the outside world was accidental. Even her mother was accidental to her: a condition that happened to endure'.

It is one of Lawrence's concerns that there should be, in the human psyche, an harmonious transition from this pre-

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* Cf. 'Fantasia of the Unconscious'(P.60): 'But we have to know ourselves pretty thoroughly before we can break the automatism of ideals and conventions... Only through fine delicate knowledge can we recognise and release our impulses'.

pre-mental world to that of adult consciousness. One of the significent characteristics of Ursula Brangwen is that, 'wide-eyed, unseeing, she was awake before she knew how to see. She was awakened too soon'. The reason for this is the spiritual demands made upon her by her father, the sacrifice of what Lawrence, in 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious' refers to as the 'polarity' of relationships. Had the polarity not been forced Ursula would have been spared this spiritual growing-pain:

'Still she set towards him like a quivering needle. All her life was directed by awareness of him, her wakefulness to her being. And she was against her mother.

'...The clasp of his hands and the power of his breast, woke her up almost in pain from the transient unconsciousness of childhood...Too soon the call had come to her, when she was a small baby, and her father held her close to his breast, her sleep-living heart was beaten into wakefulness by the striving of his bigger heart, by his clasping her to his body for love and for fulfillment, asking as a magnet must always ask. From her the response had struggled dimly, vaguely into being'.

It is the idea of vital polarity in relationships, of polarity achieved and also of polarity unnaturally forced, that Lawrence is chiefly interested in in the exploration of human relations. The polarity begins within the human being and progresses outward in the widening circle of human relations, working towards balance and harmony. In chapters three and four of 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious' 'The Birth of Consciousness' and 'The Child and His Mother' Lawrence traces the process of growth, adjustment and balance from the beginning of the life of the child. Out of the nuclear cell of individuality, the unconscious which precedes mentality, says Lawrence, consciousness slowly awakens. He locates this awakening in two primary centres of awareness. The first of these he calls the 'sympathetic', the second the 'voluntary'. The sympathetic centre is concerned only with

with unison with the mother, with at-oneness. As yet no objectivity exists, only a subjective, rich communion. The physical aspect of this condition is imbibing, sucking. Lawrence refers to this condition as positive in contradistinction to the second 'voluntary centre' which he calls negative in the sense that its aim is a revolt from union, a repudiation which manifests itself in the power to scream and the ability to kick. Still the motion is subjective: only the lower centres of individuality are awake, the mind remaining dormant, uninformed.

Between the two centres, the sympathetic drawing power into the abdomen, the voluntary into the spine and the back, a balance is effected, a direction for development established and in this process 'psychic and physical development run parallel, though they are for ever distinct'.

After the awakening of the lower, subjective, follows that of the upper, objective centres. Lawrence defines the operation of the upper centres with a similar creative opposition of positive and negative. Corresponding with the first sympathetic centre in the solar plexus', we have the upper objective sympathetic centre in the cardiac plexus: 'From the cardiac plexus', he writes, 'goes forth that strange effluence of the self which seeks and dwells upon the beloved... transferring her mould, for ever into its own deep unconscious pysche'. The hands reach out to know, to grasp, to cherish, to realise the beloved'. The eyes begin to perceive. From the breast of the child goes forth 'the first ministration of the self to that which is beyond the self'. The creative opposition which, on the lower plane of consciousness, is provided by the 'voluntary centre', on the upper plane comes again from a component, referred to once more as 'negative', which keeps the integral balance within the psyche. This is the thoracic centre of the shoulders which is 'passionately discriminative', recognising separation and distance: 'From the strong ganglion of the shoulders proceeds the negative circuit... (this) is a strong rejective force... which, pressing upon

upon the object of attention, in the mode of separation, succeeds in transferring to itself the impression of the object to which it has attended'. From this centre proceeds objective knowledge as distinct from objective emotion. The recognition of distance and of separation now entering the human psyche, it is enabled to distinguish the limits of its own existence, it is enabled to proceed into the wider circle of familial and social relations which are its setting. And it is in this setting that Lawrence follows out the exploration: 'No human being', as he writes, 'can develop save through the polarised connection with other beings'.

Before going on to this social aspect of his thought, one might place side by side in the Lawrence's 'creative oppositions' and his ~~polarities~~ polarities of negative and positive, the equivalent picture from Freud of the psyche in its first stages of growth. It may be objected, I think, that Lawrence's own picture is unscientific, but there is certainly nothing more arbitrary in its labels than in Freud's 'id', 'ego' and 'super-ego' and the connotation which he gives these entities. One can perhaps best register one's aroused suspicion by asking what could be less scientific and more the product of an anxious and one-sided mind than Freud's 'id' which he places primary in human growth, i.e. in the position of Lawrence's 'creative unconscious'. 'The core of our being' says Freud ('An Outline of Psychoanalysis, Chap.Vll), '... is formed by the obscure id, which has no direct relation with the external world and is accessible even to our knowledge only through the medium of another agency of the mind... The id obeys the inexorable pleasure principle'. Man's primary nature is that of a divided and degenerate being, but from 'the cortical layer of the id' develops the ego which, though 'originally identical with this enemy' (italics mine), modifies the id, though it does not nullify it. The id can overcome the unwatchful ego and drag it back into unconsciousness, can 'turn the ego back into a portion of the id'.

Now

Now there is something suspicious about this id which is 'the core of our being', but which is frightened of consciousness, and there is something suspiciously 'mental' about 'the inexorable pleasure principle' (Freud is fond of the word 'inexorable'). When he quotes Diderots 'Le Neveu de Rameau' in Chapter VII to illustrate or rather blacken the primary urges of the unconscious one begins to see just how mental the pleasure principle can be: 'Si le petit sauvage était abandonné a lui - même, qu'il conservât toute son imbécilité et qu'il réunit au peu de raison de l'enfant au berceau la violence des passions de l'homme de trente ans, il tordrait le cou a son père et coucherait avec sa mère' What one has in this curiously twisted analogy is a tendency towards melodramatic overemphasis and not scientific statement. There is nothing primary in the picture of 'le petit sauvage': he is the aggressive, anxious product of an obsessed mind and the pleasure principle which is at work here belongs not to the primary unconscious, as Lawrence sees it, but rather to conscious greed, to the vicious idolatory of self. Lawrence was one of the first to see this unscientific side of Freud's thought and it was he who remarked: 'The analyst wants to break all this image business, so that life can flow freely. But it is useless to try to do so by replacing in the unconscious another image - this time, the image, the fixed motive of the incest complex...While the Freudian theory of the unconscious and the incest-motive is valuable as a description of our psychological condition, the moment you begin to apply it, and make it master of the living situation, you have begun to substitute one mechanistic or unconscious illusion for another'. ('Phoenix, P.378)*

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* Dr I.D.Suttie in 'The Origins of Love and Hate' has commented interestingly on Freud's deliberately aggressive representation of 'primary' psychic urges, noting his 'grudge against mothers and a mind-blindness for love, equal and opposite to the mind-blindness and repugnance that many of his opponents had for sex... Freud's father-worship,' he continues, 'shows itself again in his overlooking the primal fact of the Oedipus legend itself, namely that the initial aggression came from Laios, the jealous father, himself.'

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The impression one derives from Lawrence's account of the psyche in 'Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious' and again, at greater length, in 'Phantasia of the Unconscious', is one of a mind free from aggressive anxieties and therefore all the more able to plot the primary movements of the human development. There is no doubt, of course, that Lawrence's relation with his mother affected his psychological outlook, but only in the sense that it quickened it. 'There is in fact', says F.R.Leavis ('The Novel as Dramatic Poem (VII): The Rainbow', 'Scrutiny Vol. XIX No.1) 'no more impressive mark of his genius than what he did with his 'misfortune': he turned it into insight. It was a triumph of supreme intelligence - the intelligence that is inseparable from imagination and self-knowledge'.

The agression - and anxiety - free contrast with Freud strikes one again in the final chapter of 'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious' when the social aspect of man is considered. Where Freud speaks of aggression, power, coercion, Lawrence speaks of relationships. In 'The Future of an Illusion' (pages 10-13) Freud who sees love as self-gratifying sex, characteristically (and mechanistically) sees culture as a sexual substitute manifested as the desire for material possessions. The shaping factors of culture are 'coercion and instinctual renunciation' since 'all men are destructive'. The basic motives behind it are materialistic.*

'The individual psyche divided against itself divides the world against itself'. This sentence of Lawrence might serve as commentary on the world Freud would have us believe to be the inevitable one. Lawrence's belief maintains that there is a norm natural to man and that this norm can only be perceived when we realise what is primary in man's make-up and take that as the starting place for our psychological investigations as for our ideals. Lawrence's doctrine of the unconscious does not

* Freud signicantly sees the golden age (which the destructiveness of man makes impossible) as a state when 'men might devote themselves to the acquisition of natural resources and to the enjoyment of the same.'

not imply a refusal of conscious intelligence, but that intelligence must be the fruit of primary wholeness and rooted in the creative unconscious; nor does it imply that absence of individuality which Middleton Murry and Edwin Muir have both attributed to Lawrence's personages: '...it would seem' says Lawrence, 'that the term unconscious is only another word for life. But life is a general force, whereas the unconscious is essentially single and unique in each individual organism; it is the active, self-evolving soul bringing forth its own incarnation and manifestation.' 'And one of the principle needs of this manifestation is the capacity for relationships: 'It is the circuit of vital flux between itself and another being or beings which brings about the development and evolution of every individual psyche and physique'.

(iii)

'Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious' with its intuition of relationships provides a helpful point in the Lawrence's work from which to pursue his intuition of relationships in their social and cosmic setting. A reading of Lawrence confirms concretely one's impressions of the dependence of the individual (in no narrowing Marxist sense) upon his community. 'It is' as Lawrence says in Chapter IV of 'Apocalypse', 'a curious thing, but the collective will of a community really reveals the basis of the individual will'. And in Chapter XXII: 'My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation'. This, on the face of it, is nothing new, but read in the Lawrencian context it is backed by a concreteness of vision and a depth of contemporary relevance; to consummate the organic relation with 'the great human soul' is nothing spaciously and irresponsibly Whitmanesque, but a concrete and verifiable necessity: 'What we want' in the concluding words of 'Apocalypse', 'is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections with the cosmos,

the

the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family? The sense of community is one of the most vivid ideas embodied in 'The Rainbow', and there, as here, there is the interdependence of social and cosmic, of man and Nature - though Lawrence preferred not to use the capital 'N' of Wordsworth: its connotation was too near for him to the world of the eighteenth century and the 'homme de bien... perfectly reasonable and perfectly irreligious... Nature with a capital. There is nothing to worship. Such a thing as worship is nonsense. But you may get a 'feeling' out of anything'. ('The Good Man': Phoenix, P.751) And here he is caricaturing the eighteenth century attitude against which both Wordsworth and Coleridge rebelled while accepting (and transforming) one of its fundamental terms.

The invasion of 'natural' England by industrial, urban England is the crux of Lawrence's experience of and attitude to the idea of community. One of the ways of looking at Lawrence (a somewhat impoverishing one), recommended by Stephen Spender in 'The Destructive Element', is to regard 'especially the descriptive passages in his novels, and the Nature poems in 'Birds, Beasts and Flowers'.' A more rewarding approach is, I think, to regard especially that impressive unity of vision which observes and intuits Nature and which is able to bring to bear the same sensitivity of intuitive response within the sociological sphere. A passage comes to mind from 'Women in Love', that key-work to an understanding of pre-1914 English society. Gudrun Brangwen reflects on the meaning of the individual, creative life and in relating it to a society where will and 'idea' have become the moving factors, 'a terrible cynicism (begins) to gain upon her':

And at the same instant came the ironical question: 'What for?' She thought of the colliers' wives, with their linoleum and their lace curtains and their little girls in high-laced boots. She thought of the wives and daughters of the pit-managers, their tennis-parties, and their terrible

struggles

to be superior each to the other, in the social scale. There was Shortlands with its meaningless distinction, the meaningless crowd of the Criches. There was London, the House of Commons, the extant social world. My God!

Young as she was, Gudrun had touched the whole pulse of social England!

That, indeed , to have touched the whole pulse of social England, is the experience one takes away with one from a reading of 'Women in Love,' and it is an experience which is renewed throughout the Lawrence oeuvre in different contexts, and with different emphases. In 'The Lost Girl' which Lawrence began writing simultaneously with 'The Rainbow', one sees the industrial midlands in all their grimness and grime, and the social picture is established with a humour, which Lawrence is seldom conceded to have, and which stands in direct line of descent from Charles Dickens:

'Take a mining townlet like Woodhouse, with a population of ten thousand people, and three generations behind it. This space of three generations argues a certain well-established society. The old 'Country' has fled from the sight of so much disembowelled coal, to flourish on mineral rights in regions still idyllic. Remains one great and inaccessible magnate, the local coal owner: three generations old, and clambering on the bottom step of the 'County,' kicking off the mass below. Rule him out.

'A well established society in Woodhouse, full of fine

shades, ranging from the dark of coal dust to grit of stone-mason and sawdust of timber-merchant, through the lustre of lard and butter and meat, to the perfume of the chemist and the disinfectant of the doctor, on to the serene gold-tarnish of bank-managers, cashiers for the firm, clergymen and such-like, as far as the automobile refulgence of the general-manager of all the collieries. Here the ne plus ultra. The general-manager lives in the shrubberied seclusion of the so-called Manor. The genuine Hall, abandoned by the 'County', has been taken over as offices by the firm.

The feeling for what this society represents and what it lacks is set over against the need for 'spontaneous-creative fulness of being,' a need located in the central drama of the novels and their pattern of relationships. The challenge of social reality, its ability to deform humanity and to defeat the need for fulfillment, is nowhere more intensely expressed than in the passage from 'Lady Chatterley's Lover,' where Constance Chatterley drives in the motor car through the mining countryside:

'The car ploughed uphill through the long squalid straggle of Tevereshall, the blackened brick dwellings, the black slate roofs glistening their sharp edges, the mud black with coal dust, the pavements wet and black. It was as if dismalness had soaked through and through everything. The utter negation of natural beauty, the utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty was appalling. The stacks of soap in the grocers' shops, the

rhubarb and lemons in the greengrocers', the awful hats in the milliners! All went by ugly, ugly, followed by the plaster and gilt horror of the cinema with its wet picture announcements. 'A Woman's Love!' and the new big Primitive Chapel, primitive enough in its stark brick and big panes of greenish and raspberry glass in the windows... Just beyond were the new school buildings, expensive pink brick and gravelled playground inside iron railings, all very imposing, and mixing the suggestion of a chapel and a prison. Standard Five girls were having a singing lesson, just finishing the la-me-doh exercise and beginning 'a sweet children's song. Anything more unlike song, spontaneous song, would be impossible to imagine: a strange bawling yell that followed the outlines of a tune. It was not like savages; savages have subtle rhythms. It was not like animals: animals mean something when they yell. It was like nothing on earth, and it was called singing. Connie sat and listened with her heart in her boots, as Field was filling petrol. What could possibly become of such a people, a people in whom the living intuitive faculty was dead as nails, and only queer mechanical yells and uncanny will-power remained.'

Among the wealth of Lawrence's essays one might quote from 'Nottinghamshire and Mining Countryside' to show what as a subtle social observer, aware of the more than social depth of the individual life, Lawrence saw. The life of his childhood, which was 'a curious cross between industrialism and the old agricultural England of Shakespeare and Milton and Fielding and George Eliot', is poignantly evoked - on the one hand the mining

villages with their 'dull little shops' and 'grim blank street', on the other the world of Nature:

'We lived in the Breach, in a corner house. A field-path came down under a great hawthorn hedge. On the other side was the brook, with the old sheep-bridge going over into the meadows. The hawthorn hedge by the brook had grown tall as tall trees, and we used to bathe from there in the dipping hole, where the sheep were dipped, just near the fall from the old mill-dam, where the water rushed. The mill only ceased grinding the local corn when I was a child. And my father who always worked in Brinsley pit, . . . would set off in the dawn across the fields at Coney Grey and hunt for mushrooms in the long grass, or perhaps pick up a skulking rabbit, which he would bring home at evening inside the lining of his pit-coat.'

Lawrence's picture in this essay of the colliers of his father's generation is a sympathetic one - they are still instinctively intact:

'Under the butty system, the miners worked underground as a sort of intimate community, they knew each other practically naked, and with a curious close intimacy, and the darkness and the underground remoteness of the pit 'stall', and the continual presence of danger, made the physical, instinctive, and intuitional contact between men very highly developed, a contact almost as close as touch, very real and very powerful. This physical awareness and intimate <u>togetherness</u> was at its strongest down pit.' And again there is the vitalizing inter-dependence of the world of work and

the world of Nature: '(The collier) roved the countryside with his dog, prowling for a rabbit, for nests, for mushrooms, anything. He loved the countryside, just the indiscriminate feel of it. Or he loved just to sit on his heels and watch - anything or nothing. He was not intellectually interested. Life for him did not consist in facts, but in a flow. Very often he loved his garden. And very often he had a genuine love of the beauty of flowers..... I've seen many a collier stand in his back garden looking down at a flower with that odd, remote sort of contemplation which shows a real awareness of the presence of beauty. It would not even be admiration, or joy, or delight, or any of those things which so often have a root in the possessive instinct. It would be a sort of contemplation: which shows the incipient artist.'

Those colliers of his father's generation emerge from these pages as a class which is still of the peasantry, at one in themselves, as yet unspoiled by 'the din-din-dinning of Board Schools, books, cinemas, clergymen, the whole national and human consciousness hammering on the fact of material prosperity above all things.' But inevitably the social tragedy involves them:

'The real tragedy of England, as I see it, 'says Lawrence, 'is the tragedy of ugliness. The country is so lovely: the man-made England is so vile. I know that the ordinary collier, when I was a boy, had a peculiar sense of beauty, coming from his intuitive and instinctive consciousness, which was awakened down pit. And the fact that he met with just cold ugliness and raw materialism when

he came up into daylight, and particularly when he came to the Square or the Breach, and to his own table, killed something in him, and in a sense spoiled him as a man.'

This ability to put his finger on the pulse of social England is the great strength of Lawrence as novelist and Lawrence as essayist. It was - to look back upon our theme - the social aspect of individual wholeness, observed by Lawrence in the impingement of two social patterns in a changing England, that he saw as largely missing in the psychologist's account of human divisions, and when Dr. Trigant Burrow turned his attention to this aspect, in his 'Social Basis of Consciousness' Lawrence honoured the book in a memorable letter and afterwards in a penetrating review. 'It is our being cut off that is our ailment, and out of this ailment everything bad arises,' runs the letter of August the third, 1927. At the end of it, Lawrence sees the problem of society as presented in the problem of the individual consciousness: 'How to prevent suburbia spreading over Eden (too late! it's done) - how to prevent Eden running to a great wild wilderness - there you are ... How to regain the naïve or innocent soul - how to make it the man within man .... and at the same time keep the cognitive mode for defences and adjustments and 'work' - voila!' In the review of Trigant Burrow's book Lawrence restated the problem. The nature of man's consciousness is the first facet of it which he examines:

'The real trouble lies in the inward sense of 'separateness' which dominates every man. At a certain point in his evolution,

man became cognitively conscious: he bit the apple: he began to know. Up till that time his consciousness flowed unaware, as in the animals. Suddenly, his consciousness split.'

Man, aware of himself, aware of his difference from and his distance from the rest of creation, grows lonely, grows aggressive, grows conceited, makes a social image for himself to follow and falsifies his nature and consciousness.

'Consciousness should be a flow,' says Lawrence, 'from within outwards. The organic necessity of the human being should flow into spontaneous action and spontaneous awareness, consciousness.

'But the moment man became aware of himself he made a picture of himself, and began to live from the picture: that is, from without inwards. This is truly the reversal of life. And this is how we live. We spend all our time over the picture. All our education is but the elaborating of the picture. 'A good little girl' - 'a brave boy' - 'a noble woman' - 'a strong man' - 'a productive society' - 'a progressive humanity' - it is all the picture. It is all living from the outside to the inside. It is all the death of spontaneity. It is all strictly automatic. It is all the vicious unconscious which Freud postulated.'

Thus there begins 'the idolatory of self', love becomes 'one of the universal forms of self-seeking', normality is equated with 'pushing your own interest with every atom of energy you can command. It is 'normal' to get on, to get ahead at whatever cost.' What Lawrence and Burrow both wish for is a

societal flow where the integral unconscious can come creatively into play, though as Lawrence remarked in the letter from which we have already quoted: 'There will never be a millenium. There will never be a 'true societal flow' - all things are relative. Men were never, in the past, fully societal - and they never will be in the future. But more so, more than now. Now is the time between, Good Friday and Easter. We're absolutely in the tomb.'

In his correspondence with Trigant Burrow and in his review of the father's book one feels Lawrence's Wordsworthian awareness of the flow between the individual and the social body. And there is a further Wordsworthian trait. As Wordsworth saw the organic social pattern breaking apart he insisted more and more in his letters on the necessity for avoiding the warfare of classes and preventing the disappearance of a measure of trust between the strata of society. Lawrence returns to the same question as he denounces in the review those dead concepts of 'social' and 'normal' that warp individual responsiveness:

'. . . The Bolshevist hysteria of today (is) . . . incipient social insanity. And the last great insanity of all, which is going to tear our civilisation to pieces, the insanity of class hatred, is almost entirely a 'normal' and a 'social' thing. It is a state of fear, a ghastly collective fear, ~~of ghastly collective fear~~ . . . Between man and man, class hatred hardly exists. It is an insanity of the mass, rather than the individual.'

What Burrow calls 'the societal consciousness' and Lawrence 'human consciousness', in contrast to 'the social or image consciousness' of the anxiety-ridden, always comes back to the need for self-responsible individuals who, like the man to whom Wordsworth's child is father, retain the pristine view of life. In the essay 'The Individual Consciousness versus the Social Consciousness,' printed in 'Phoenix', we read,

'.... the individual who still retains his individuality, his basic at-oneness or innocence or naïveté, can deal with the material world successfully. He can be analytical and critical upon necessity. But at the core, he is always naïve or innocent or at one.' Again in the broad organic lines of the following in the same essay the vision of both Lawrence and Wordsworth are identical:

'In the past, children were supposed to be 'innocent.' Which means that they were like animals, not split into subjective and objective consciousness. They were one living continuum with all the universe. This is the essential state of innocence, of naïveté, and it is the persistance of this state all through life, as the basic state of consciousness, which preserves the human being all his life fresh and alive, a true individual.'

A 'living continuum with all the universe' links the organic sensibility with Nature and in this phrase we have conveyed one of the most significant of Romantic intuitions. The opposed 'social consciousness' of which Lawrence speaks,

means for him the dead image man has made of himself. In its wider sense one might, I think, apply it also to the withered feeling of Baudelaire, unrefreshed by the flow from inner to outer: 'The social individual . . . is capable only of the feelings which are really sensation' and again, 'The social consciousness . . . can know but it cannot be. It is always made up of a duality . . . And the one half in the duality neutralizes, in the long run, the other half.' Thus the 'social consciousness' represents all that is secondary and not primary, whether the imposition of sensation-seeking Sensibility, of false spirituality, vanity greed or merely the plain 'matter of fact' unimaginative vision. It may operate in a Leopold Bloom or a Stephen Dedalus.

In the four writers I have dealt with in the above pages, the individual-social flow is most comparable in Lawrence and Wordsworth. In Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' the poet's image of society is present in the church assembly, but the Mariner is ultimately divided from it, a sick man. In Baudelaire the individual-social flow is all but arrested and the poet, identifying himself with Delphine in 'Femmes Damnées' observes in her person:

Que nos rideaux fermés nous séparent du monde.

The two women, like the decadent poet, find themselves

Loin des peuples vivants, errantes, condamnées.

The social issue and the individual issue are inextricably knit. The creative unconscious seeks an outlet in a positive social pattern. The creative unconscious and the social

pattern are again in need of a further reference, a further relation: in the letter to Trigant Burrow, after discussing the need for a societal flow, Lawrence adds, 'And I do think that man is related to the universe in some 'religious' way, even prior to his relation to his fellow man.' It was this that the Romantic intuition of Nature meant at its deepest and on the common ground of Lawrence's statement of it Coleridge, Wordsworth and Lawrence all meet. Ultimately, by rejecting Nature, Baudelaire was rejecting <u>life.</u> Coleridge, Wordsworth and Lawrence reach out towards Nature not only as environment, a source of images, but as a testing place for the quality of <u>living</u> feelings, a measure of our life's continuity, of an individual wholeness and intensity of perception.

Thus it is that Wordsworth reached out towards the rainbow as a touchstone of the worth of his whole existence:

> My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky:
> So was it when my life began;
> So is it now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall grow old
> Or let me die!

Thus it is again that Coleridge measured the failing of his life-energy by recording the break between himself and a joyfully apprehended Nature:

> O Lady! we receive but what we give
> And in our life alone does nature live.

Much later, Lawrence was to write: 'Don't let us imagine we see the sun as the old civilisations saw it. All we see is a scientific luminary, dwindled to a ball of flaming gas . . . We

may see what we call the sun, but we have lost Helios forever and the great orb of the Chaldeans still more.' And here, the test which Coleridge applied to himself as an individual out of harmony with natural creation, Lawrence applies to a world out of harmony with natural creation. It is a test which calls into question the quality of the conscious and unconscious beliefs of that world and its thwarting of the whole man.

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